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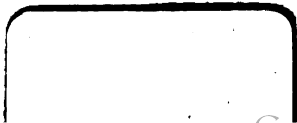
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EIGHT HISTORICAL DISSERTATIONS

ON

SUICIDE,

CHIEFLY IN REFERENCE

TO

PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND LEGISLATION.

BY

H. G. Migault.

„Traß ist das Leben.“
Schiller.



Heidelberg.

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1856.



To
a clear-sighted, noble-minded, and tender-hearted woman,
S. A. Migault,
I inscribe,
on this her Birth-day,
in token of most sincere affection,
the following sheets.

PREFACE.

The Reader will find on the two last pages of the final § of this Treatise most of what would otherwise have had to stand *here*: therefore, I may *now* be very brief.

Whosoever is inclined to wonder more or less at my having pondered with much scrupulous interest a subject which, besides being somewhat hackneyed, can scarcely fail to appear unto many extremely ungenial, is gently requested not to leave unheeded an incidental allusion which occurs in §. 13; at the same time, however, I must confess that an academical purpose, for which this literary attempt was originally intended, induced me to bestow upon it a greater measure of, at all events, philological variety and minuteness than I might otherwise have deemed necessary. Yet, to whatever amount of careful reading and reflection this humble performance itself should bear testimony, I am, since it has lain before me in its printed form, already very keenly alive to — besides mere Errata of the character intimated *s. v.* Misprints on the last leaf, *e. g.* incontestible for incontestable, *vericundus* for *verecundus*, etc. — some few palpable omissions as well as slight mistakes, so that I could now, without much labor or trouble, append a sheet of additions and corrections, if I did not believe it more advisable, considering the great length to which the Book has, almost imperceptibly, grown, to reserve such new materials and more accurate analysis to occupy the place of repetitions that shall be expunged, and of trivial quotations or gratuitous references that shall be withdrawn, in a second edition, should a second edition chance to become, sooner or later, requisite. For the present, I will content myself with modestly suggesting to the Reader a perusal of the entire work, ere he condemn any particular portion of it, inasmuch as I have not infrequently inserted in one § what I had neglected to adduce in some other §, where it would have stood more properly, and to revoke or to modify on one page what I had unwillingly and unwittingly misstated or misinterpreted on another.

Oral assistance I have solicited and received in two instances only, viz. on a Sanskrit vocable and a Rabbinical passage, — and the results of that aid I have duly acknowledged in §. 37 and §. 47; nor have I ever consciously evaded mentioning any one of the numerous *Writings* I have consulted, and to some of which I have been largely indebted, for information: but, strange to say, to the sole — as far as I am aware — existent professedly *historical* monographs on Suicide, the complete titles of which I am now about to give, the following attempt at something resembling at least an *organic* history, theoretical and practical, of Suicide owes, whilst nothing at all in point of form or spirit, so little upon the whole as regards matter that, I may without ingratitude venture to affirm, the said series of ethical dissertations would have turned out pretty much as and what they are, whether bad, indifferent, or good, supposing the zealously Catholic Italian Priest Buonafede,¹⁾ the drily orthodox Anglican clergyman Moore,²⁾ and the semi-rationalistic German Professor of Divinity Stäudlin³⁾ not to have preceded me with their respective, very much scantier and more limited, and scarcely more than nominally kindred, *Essays*: thence, indeed, though I did peruse Stäudlin's work attentively, I merely dipped into Buonafede's, and read only about one third of Moore's. However, I feel the invidiousness of even touching upon suchlike wholesale comparisons: wherefore, gladly leaving the Reader to form his own opinion by consulting for himself the three literary performances I have just drawn his special attention to, I will speedily conclude by begging his leave — be he courteously or be he discourteously disposed towards the publication now submitted „with all its imperfections on its head“ to his indulgent notice — to remind him of two very simple, but very weighty, lines in one of our English Hymns:

„'Tis not the whole of life — to live;
Nor all of death — to die.“

Nuremberg, Oct. 25, 1855.

H. G. M.

¹⁾ *Storia critica e filosofica del suicidio*, 1761, — translated anno 1841 into French, with sundry Appendices, under the title of „*Histoire critique et philosophique du suicide*“ by MM. Armellino and Guérin. ²⁾ A full Inquiry into the subject of Suicide; to which are added, (as being closely connected with the same subject,) two Treatises on Duelling and Gaming, 1790. ³⁾ *Geschichte der Vorlesungen und Lehren vom Selbstmorde*, 1824.

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Introduction.

CHAPTER I. ETYMOLOGICAL.

§. 1. Preliminary remark.

Every reader of this Chapter will very soon perceive that *mere etymological* investigations are not by any means my ultimate object in selecting and discussing the chief, if not the only, designations of that act, the history of which, in a doctrinal and legislative point of view, I shall attempt to write; that, indeed, these designations will be used mainly as a legitimate and convenient peg on which I may hang sundry more or less significant and important preliminary ethico-philosophical and historico-ethical observations and disquisitions, as a fountain-head out of which various comments, inferences, parallels will naturally and necessarily flow. Mere vocables, in whatsoever degree they may be, and really are, interesting and fruitful in a strictly grammatical performance, have, nevertheless, no urgent claim upon attention and consideration in such a Treatise as the present one, unless they can be shown and proved to involve points of vital import, and to afford scope for the suggestion and solution of essential difficulties. And I need scarcely remark that from very many words, as such, various kinds and degrees of light may be derived about the notions and manners, the mental insights and moral convictions of mankind in general or of individual nations: as they are the outgrowths and results, so they are likewise the records and witnesses of what man thought, felt, acted in reference to this or that especial subject; they have, as their ethical significance, so likewise their popular history. I must, however, add that, being fully conscious of the very questionable character which frequently attaches to the results of etymological researches, I shall not in any portion of this Chapter regard mere etymologies as a sound and solid basis of argument. Wishing the

reader to understand, clearly and fully, what I believe to constitute the real nature, and to mark the exact boundaries, of suicide, I will endeavor to extract from word-roots and word-forms such reflections and definitions as may be thereto needed or useful.

§. 2. The term Suicide.

The word *suicide* is, palpably, of Latin root and form; but it is not of classical origin, nor is it even of mediaeval growth: it is, rather, only a comparatively recent coinage of the Romanic languages, and would seem to be traceable to the first half of the 18th century. Chaucer, Shakspeare, Pascal, for instance, still employ slightly or essentially different expressions which will come before us in the sequel, and, indeed, the elder Desfontaines († 1745) is stated¹⁾ to have been the first who shaped and employed the term under mention. However, for the last half-century or century this word has among ourselves, as well as in French, pretty nearly supplanted its predecessors; for instance, the synonymous term „self-slaughter“ has passed almost into disuse, as the somewhat equivocal periphrasis „homicide volontaire“, scil. „de soi-même“, has ceased to be in use at all. The analogously moulded Teutonic word *Selbsttödtung*, which the Germans (and, I presume, the Dutch, the Danes &c.) occasionally employ, possesses at least one decided advantage over the Romanic one, inasmuch as it applies to the deed only, whereas suicide both in French and English designates, without any distinction whatsoever, equally the action and the agent, though the genius of the Latin language would, doubtless, have admitted and required a terminal difference, viz. *suicidium* and *suicida*, as exemplified in the cognate formations *homicidium* and *homicida*, *parricidium* and *parricida*. In English, this linguistic inaccuracy has been felt; for I have read of attempts at removing it, e. g. reserving the form *suicide* for the designation of the person exclusively, the form „suicism“ or „suicidium“ has been proposed for the exclusive designation of the deed; but suicism is so mutilated that it is not intelligible, and suicidium is manifestly too clumsy to merit adoption.

Thus much concerning the *external* history and character of the term suicide; now an equally rapid glance at its *internal* bearing

¹⁾ Vide *Rechtsg. Staatsrecht* von Meier u. Goussier, B. VII, p. 270, note.

and meaning. It speaks, if etymologically defined, of a man's killing or slaying his *self*, his *se*, his *proprium* (cf. the kindred term *propridium* which some writers employ); but does it then not appear too significant and too comprehensive for what it is really intended to convey? Does he who commits suicide thereby slay, destroy, deprive of vitality — his *veritable self*? Most assuredly, he does not, if, after the visible portion of the human plant has been mown down by death's scythe, and left to fade and rot into the dust whence it sprang, an invisible seed of immortality still remain, transplanted elsewhere, there to bloom and thrive anew in self-consciousness and self-manifestation; most assuredly, he does not, if all death and any death be mere translation, continuation, resurrection of Being, and in no wise obstruction, cessation, and annihilation of it.

The late distinguished Chinese scholar and semi-missionary, Gützlaff, emphatically and repeatedly states¹⁾ that the national creed of the ancient and modern inhabitants of the Celestial Realm ignores the immortality of the soul; and Morrison²⁾ singles out, as the most usual one, from among the rather numerous expressions which the Chinese language possesses for the act under discussion „tsze tsin“, i. e. to put a *termination* to one's existence. I cannot exactly credit Gützlaff's assertion for reasons I shall assign in the sequel, nor do I know a word of Chinese; indeed, I meant merely to give an instance of perfect harmony between a materialistic belief and a materialistic expression, whereas the bulk of us unwittingly and unwillingly speak the dialect of *materialism*, when we employ the term „suicide“, or put in the newspaper that N. N. has „taken away his existence“; for, I may incidentally remark, the term „existence“, howsoever mysterious its etymological import may be, is invariably understood as conveying something even more pregnant and generic than the term *life*. The bulk of us do believe with more or less of clearness and certainty that *this* life of ours is not *the* life, and that man's *mortal career* is not his *existence*; that our genuine and real *se* or *self* is, rather, a spiritual and divine essence which, because immortal, we *cannot* kill, i. e. annihilate, even if we *would*; although, at the same time, we are very far from inclining to deny the value and closeness of the connexion between the body and the soul of man in the sphere of

¹⁾ Vide his *History of China, ancient and modern*, 1831. ²⁾ *Chinese Dictionary*, Vol. I, p. 942.

space and time, or, from being unable to realize to ourselves in deep and keen individual consciousness the momentous significance of that which we *can* destroy and which the suicide *does* destroy. Whilst, however, no such inadequate analogies, lame similes, or frivolous sneers of philosophic systems, mystic pietisms, or unholy scoffers as we shall by and by hear of, need rob us of these convictions, it now becomes our duty to enquire, historically and psychologically, what the relations are in which Annihilation and Immortality as two great opposite faiths have stood to the theory and practice of suicide in ancient and modern days; we shall then see that comparatively few among those who vindicated self-slaughter, or slew themselves, either wished, or expected, to destroy their *selves*, so that, even in this point of view, a certain kind and measure of one-sidedness and carelessness might be said to attach to the term Suicide.

§. 3. The relation of Annihilation and Immortality to Suicide.

If in the stilly depths of the silent soul by lonely night we would fain try to work out clearly and fully the notion of Annihilation, and to grasp firmly, and hold fast for a while, its image, most of us would stagger, shrink, start back, shudder, as did the German prose-poet at his own „Atheist's Dream“, or, as did the fictitious Frankenstein before his own „Monster“. *That* sleep into a dreamless, dawnless, everlasting blank; *that* sudden full-stop to the „beautiful, friendly habitude of Being and Working“, to all expression of the heart's longings, to every endeavor of the mind's energies; *that* abrupt closing and final clasping of the life-book over whose leaves we had so familiarly and fondly pored and pondered: few among us, perhaps, dare to think it and believe in it. When wishing and hoping and preparing for the sweet, undisturbed rest of a long, deep slumber, Death's daily recurring shadowy type and hymned twin-brother, in the softening similitude of which the N. T. itself has arrayed the terrors of the last foe, we involuntarily think of its *refreshing* influence; and this very thought of its *quickening* power implies and pre-supposes the expectation and assurance of a *re-awaking*, the anticipation of a morn after the night, of labor after the repose, of realities that shall again and still and ever haunt, and cling to, the soul.

Thence it comes that several among those who have written expressly on and against suicide would fain impress upon us that among the most terrible of terrors which reflecting man can form any idea of, Annihilation presents itself foremost, or next to foremost. Three somewhat modern thinkers I will here already quote. Reinhard says of Annihilation: ¹⁾ „quod humana natura omnium maxime detestatur ac perhorrescit.“ Formey: ²⁾ „je ne sache que la damnation éternelle qui puisse faire souhaiter l'anéantissement; et j'ai même ouï souvent dire à un homme d'un savoir et d'un mérite distingué (feu M. la Croze), qu'il auroit peine à opter dans cette terrible alternative.“ Mendelssohn: ³⁾ „und wenn eine ewige Verdammniß möglich wäre; so müßte sie der Ruchlose dennoch seiner Zernichtung vorziehen.“ What these men, to whose respective essays we shall have to revert more fully in the sequel, themselves thought, felt, believed, they had, of course, a perfect right also to utter; but their utterances possess only individual truth and relative value; else, this would be a justifiable inference and a self-evident proposition: those who have either been educated, or have speculated themselves, into the presumption or conviction of the mortal nature of the human soul, must be least inclined and least addicted to suicide; for unto *them* a prolongation of even the most miserable existence on earth would of necessity appear preferable to utter cessation of being outside the earth; and, consequently, the belief in Annihilation could not but be, as it were, a kind of *preventive* of self-destruction. However, the facts of the case in both Pagan and Christian history urge a widely different conclusion upon us. We will here and throughout this § merely intimate what we shall demonstrate on later occasions. Lucretius, the elder Pliny, the younger Seneca, Epictetus, Tacitus, Hume, Holbach, Frederick the Great, for instance, extolled and commended suicide as a glorious privilege of human liberty, as a necessary condition of human happiness; and, to a very considerable extent at least, posterity is in a position to know that the views of these respective ancient and modern writers concerning the soul's destiny after death were of a more or less annihilation-predicting character: Lucretius

¹⁾ Diss. de morte voluntaria quid et quam clare praecepiat philosophia, 1778; in his Opuscula academica, vol. I, p. 77. ²⁾ Diss. sur le meurtre volontaire de soi-même, 1754, in his Mélanges philosophiques, tome I, p. 200. ³⁾ Briefe über die Empfindungen, 1780, in his sämtliche Werke, 8. 2, p. 161 (of the Ofen edit.).

and the elder Pliny scout the idea of the immortality of the soul; Hume and Holbach flatly deny that the soul is immortal, and Frederick the Great appears to do the same (but he is somewhat vague in his communications on this point, and sometimes seems to contradict himself); and, finally, the younger Seneca, Tacitus and Epictetus apparently considered the perishing of the individual soul as more than probable (for there is in their writings a sort of modest wavering on this subject). But, — one might object, — arguing in defence of suicide is not exactly the same thing as committing suicide; we may be bold enough to reason in favor of what we, nevertheless, do not venture to perform. True; but this admission in no wise alters or affects the real state of the case we are now enquiring into. Suicide was proverbially frequent among the followers of the Stoic school to which Epictetus belonged, and it was, doubtless, a nobler and purer and manlier motive than mere fear of annihilation which rendered him a practical example of anti-suicide, despite his pro-suicidal theories; but the younger Seneca, also a disciple of the same philosophical sect, himself informs us that, on more than one occasion, he would have committed suicide, had not filial and conjugal considerations interfered; Lucretius is generally believed to have died by his own hand, and Frederick the Great was, during certain critical periods of his career, only with difficulty prevented from putting his suicidal theory into practice. Therefore, speaking historically, — and we are standing for the present solely upon historical ground, — the belief in Annihilation is *not* a preventive of suicide.

Indeed, by far the greater number of modern thinkers would seem to have started from the very opposite hypothesis, and to view the belief in Annihilation as, theoretically and practically, even a *provocative* to suicide. It may suffice for our immediate purpose to quote the dicta of two modern thinkers who enjoyed a considerable reputation in their day. Maupertuis says:¹⁾ „Si l'on part d'une Religion, qui promette des récompenses éternelles à celui qui souffre patiemment, qui menace de chatimens éternels celui qui meurt pour ne pas souffrir; ce n'est plus ni un homme courageux, ni un lâche qui se tue, c'est un insensé: ou plutôt, la chose est impossible. Mais nous ne considérons ici l'homme que dans l'état naturel, sans crainte et

¹⁾ Essai du système des Stoiciens, 1752, in les œuvres de M. de Maupertuis, pp. 393, 394.

sans espérance d'une autre vie; uniquement occupé à rendre sa condition meilleure. Or dans cette position, il est évident qu'il n'y a ni gloire, ni raison, à demeurer en proie à des maux auxquels on peut se soustraire, par une douleur d'un moment. Dès que la somme des maux surpasse la somme des biens, le Neant est préférable à l'Etre: et les Stoïciens raisonnent juste, lorsqu'ils regardent la Mort comme un remède utile et permis." „On ne peut pas douter que cette question, du droit que l'homme a sur sa vie, ne dépende des idées qu'il a d'une Divinité qui lui permet ou qui lui défend d'en disposer; de la mortalité, ou de l'immortalité de l'ame." And Garve:¹⁾ „Die alte (i. e. Pagan) Moral verband weder die Lehre von Gott, noch von der Zukunft, so genau mit ihren Vorschriften. Und nur diese Lehren verboten den Selbstmord. In dem Gesichtspunkte, in welchem die neuere Moral diese Sachen betrachtet (und der ihr zuerst von der christlichen Religion angegeben worden), ist die gewaltsame Zerstörung unseres Körpers, dessen Bau, dessen Erhaltung nicht von uns abhängt, eine Empörung gegen die Vorsehung, ein Eingriff in die Rechte des Schöpfers. In diesem Gesichtspunkte erscheint der künftige Zustand so genau geknüpft an den gegenwärtigen, daß wir, durch ein gewaltsames Zerschneiden des Fadens unserer Schicksale, dieselben auf immer verschlimmern." Nevertheless, upon historical grounds, neither are the negation of the immortality of the soul and the vindication of suicide by any means correlatives, nor do the recognition of the soul's immortality and the condemnation of suicide necessarily grow side by side in every ethical system of classic philosophy, or barbarian superstition, or modern (christian) speculation. Witness the following corroborative instances. Aristotle denounced suicide rigorously and sweepingly; yet he, as far as we may build upon scattered incidental remarks of his, certainly denied to the soul an immortal essence; Plato reasoned most deeply and argued most eloquently to prove that the soul is immortal, yet he distinctly pronounced suicide to be under various circumstances defensible; Odinism declared suicide on sundry occasions and for sundry reasons even an indispensable condition of a blissful immortality in Walhalla; and J. J. Rousseau proclaimed in one and the same Treatise his lively conviction of the soul's immortality and his firm persuasion of the lawfulness of suicide.

¹⁾ In the *Anmerkungen und Abhandlungen* which he has appended to his translation of Cicero's *de Officiis*, 1792, B. I, pp. 138, 139.

And if, still occupying the materialistic terrain, we view our question for a moment psychologically, there would not seem to be any immediate or necessary nexus between materialism and suicide. In this matter, as in almost every other of moment, the mental and moral peculiarities of individual organism create differences and demand distinctions. What would prevent one person from committing suicide, might instigate another person to commit it; nay, even at different times and in different moods one and the same person might be differently influenced and actuated by his materialistic creed. Thus, for instance, the witty and frivolous Beaumarchais, the well-known author of the two-fold Figaro, commenting upon one of his adventures anno 1774, robbers having surprised him at Neustadt near Ratisbon, and nearly killed him, says: ¹⁾ „but if we consider that death will, perhaps, rob us of every thing, it is impossible for us to inflict it upon ourselves. Better it is *then* to live in suffering than to give up along with the sufferings also existence.“ Yet in the very same epistle, he avows that on an earlier occasion and from some other cause he had intended to destroy himself, viz. if a certain law-suit should be decided against him. Thence, as it seems to me, it is alike consonant with psychological verity, when a Hamlet is prevented from suicide only by his dread of the perchance of an Hereafter, ²⁾ and a Karl von Moor has courage to defy a Yonder, whether it bring annihilation, or life again, ³⁾ and a Hugo shrinks equally from the possibility of either annihilation or eternal judgment. ⁴⁾ Shakspeare, Schiller, Müllner had glanced keenly into the human soul, before they placed these grand suicide-soliloquies on the lips of their respective heroes; and, most assuredly, it is extremely absurd to quote, as many moralists have done, certain almost outrageously exaggerated (if they be seriously and literally meant, and not intended as mere humorous hyperbolism) lines of the Epicurean Maecenas for the purpose of proving that they who, like him, believe death to be the end of every thing, ought consistently also to echo his sentiments, and vehemently to desire to live on, at whatsoever expense of disease, pain, or mutilation. ⁵⁾ Far otherwise, I think. If — and who

¹⁾ Vide *Beaumarchais's Leben und Werke* von Beaumarchais, p. 123. ²⁾ Hamlet, III, 1. ³⁾ Die Räuber, IV, 5. ⁴⁾ Die Schöpfung, IV, 5. ⁵⁾ They are addressed to Fate, and run thus in the 10th epistle of Seneca, who lavishes much bitter censure and scornful ridicule upon them. *Debilem facito manu, Debilem pede, coxa, Tuber adstrue gibberum, Lubricos quate dentes: Vita dum superest, bene est. Hanc mihi, vel acuta Si sedeam cruce, sustine.*

is not aware that this is very, very frequently the case? — many, year by year and day by day, voluntarily cast away their earthly life, because even another year or another day of its continuance on earth seems unbearable to them, is it so difficult for us to realize unto ourselves that the guilt-laden, fearing judgment, should consider annihilation lighter than life again with its punishments; or, the remorse-stricken, shrinking from contemplation, prefer obliviousness to life again with its susceptibilities; or, even the weary, longing for repose, wish the battling brain to stop and the throbbing heart to be still for ever? Let us turn for an answer to several passages in the documents of the book of our faith;¹⁾ or, if you like, we might call to remembrance what spiritual fact is embodied in that strange christian legend of „the Wandering Jew“ who so repeatedly, though always unsuccessfully, attempts suicide, because, vehemently yearning after everlasting oblivion and riddance of Self, and aspiring only to become a cypher in the historic world of spirit-movement and of change, a branch cut off from the tree of somethingness, and cast away into the solitude of Nothingness, death is in his eyes identical with cessation of being, with unconditional annihilation. „Die Bedeutung des Todes erscheint hier in der erschütterndsten Gestalt; nicht die äußere Veränderung der Individualität ändert hierin etwas, weil es nicht das Wesentliche ist, daß der einzelne Geist den natürlichen Leib an sich trägt, sondern es ist das Wissen des Geistes von sich selbst, ob er der gute oder der böse, was den Unterschied macht.“²⁾

Reversing the picture, Immortality presents itself to our more especial notice, Eternity in Futurity somewhere and somehow; but what is it? Preservation of individuality, or, absorption into the divine essence, or, transmigration from form to form? Everlasting by dint of the soul's inborn nature, or, only temporary by divine force until a cycle of aeons shall have been traversed? Does the Holy endure for ever even without a fiat of God, and the Evil bear within itself the germ of destruction, and is the Neutral, that which is not decidedly and markedly either good or bad, undeserving of the preserving influence of Deity? Does a decree of Him Who sits

¹⁾ E. g. Luke XXIII, 30; Rev. VI, 16. ²⁾ Thus Rosencrantz in his *Geschichte der deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter*, pp. 418—424. The story of this same *Ahasverus* or *Cartiphilus* is said to have shaped itself into popular form in the 13th cent. of our era; and I may incidentally remind the reader of Schubarth's very powerful poetisation of it in his *der ewige Jude*.

upon the throne of the worlds adjudge such rewards or punishments unto the departed as we have no conception of, and can have none, — those on some bright star in the effulgence of the divine presence and the communion of sainted spirits, these in some dark cavity of unutterable, limitless, hopeless woe, far away from the Divinity and in fellowship with absolute Evil? Or, does man bear within himself Heaven or Hell, and, having undergone no essential change at the moment of his departure from his terrestrial localization, simply continue to develop himself in wish, will and work by a natural and comprehensible progression, ever on towards rise or fall, until he shall have reached the highest height of light and bliss, or have sunk into the deepest depth of gloom and doom? Or, is it of little import, of no avail what we are in and by and through ourselves, nought our love of man, our labor of life nought, our future destiny being rather, if not even pre-appointed with a subtlety despotically outrageous, yet decided solely by our acknowledgement of this or that Prophet, our adherence to this or that Ecclesiastical Polity, our subscription to this or that Credo? These or similar questions we need not and will not attempt to answer now, nor could we answer them, if we would. I for one believe not in *words*, though they should be placed before me by this or that dogmatic system as *revealed* ones; as long as I wander in the flesh, I am contented to see darkly into the invisible world, and to reason modestly from the inherent possibilities and probabilities of suchlike things, humbly and resignedly, cheerfully and hopefully looking forward to Death and the Grave as the only indubitable keys which may unlock the casket of the mysteries of Death and the Grave, and settle on the spot and for ever the idle disputes of the Schools. It is certain and it is sufficient that every known *people* — the Bojesmans, probably, as little excepted as the Chinese, despite sundry accounts to the contrary — would appear to have Eternity graven upon its heart's core with more or less distinguishable and inextinguishable letters, and to possess hopefully and fearfully a more or less deep and clear presentiment that existence on this side the floating clouds and sepulchral womb is not the „be all“ and „end all“, that the soul is not mere dust, appointed to „return unto dust“ as „the goal of life.“ It is certain and sufficient that this one *great fact* of some measure of faith in some manner of immortality of the soul binds, in spite of numerous isolated exceptional units, the entire human race as with a spirit-woof into mutual resemblance and affinity;

but, at the same time, it is self-evident that the *very varied* aspects in which the said faith historically has exhibited, and still exhibits, itself, cannot possibly have exercised or exercise the *self-same* influence upon the doctrine and practice of suicide, or, indeed, upon any (ethical) doctrine and practice whatsoever. It, therefore, argues extreme shallowness of thought or utter thoughtlessness, when people speak quite in general and without any determining modifications about the religious or moral influence of the belief in the immortality of the soul *per se*. For, is it not perfectly conceivable that a human being, though discrediting any future reward promised or punishment threatened, should simply and solely as a rational and sentient citizen of this earth of ours love what is lofty and pure, and do what is noble and just, from the consciousness that virtue and right are most consonant with human nature and the social weal, content that, though he individually perish for ever, yet the virtue he displayed and the right he defended are imperishable seeds scattered on the path-ways of humanity and constitute his most enviable immortality? Or, again, who that is observant and earnest even in our own age and land can fail to be aware that there exists more than one sort of faith in the immortality of the soul which, far from preventing or even checking what is senseless and low, rather encourages and evokes unutterable follies and innumerable evils?

But to our immediate topic. The late Joseph Blanco White, in a most painfully interesting and deeply instructive posthumous work, writes as follows.¹⁾ „The idea of suicide occurs very naturally as the means to escape that (i. e. the body's) painful controul, when carried to a high degree. The natural provision to check the desire of destroying the body is, that the only means which man has in his power for that purpose are all (according to impressions not easily overcome) intimately connected with pain — with bodily suffering, i. e. the very thing which the Self desires to avoid by destruction. This is the *natural* fear of death. In almost every degree of civilization, this fear is strengthened by *religion*.“ Doubtless, the term „religion“ was not meant to refer either to such ritual ignominy as is inflicted by the priesthood upon the corpse of a suicide, or to such fiscal measures as are enforced by the magistracy against the property of a suicide, but, rather, to a dogmatic enunciation that

¹⁾ Autobiography, edited by J. H. Thom, vol. II, p. 187.

whosoever dies by his own hand will on that account be doomed by the offended Deity to some kind of punishment in a world to come. This glance at a future state of existence implies, of course, the immortality of the soul, and, consequently, announces that the tenet and belief of the soul's immortality have been rendered subservient to the prohibition and prevention of suicide. It, therefore, behoves us to enquire: *what* „religion“ has acted or acts in the manner here presumed? Our answer shall be as brief as accuracy will admit; but we must here again hint that what we can now merely intimate will find its proper development on later occasions.

1. Classical Paganism.

Some persons might, perhaps, incline to demur to the application of the term Religion to the ethical elements of the various systems of classical philosophy; nevertheless, a few words on their relation to our subject from the standing-point of our present enquiry shall here find a place. It is true that a certain feature in the tenet of metempsychosis, that very theory which, as we shall immediately see, was turned to especial pro-suicidal account in sundry barbarous and eastern religions, enacted a somewhat important part towards evoking the condemnation and interdiction of suicide in the Grecian schools of Pythagorism and Neo-Platonism; however, upon the whole, the philosophic (or mythologic) teachings of classical Paganism touching the immortality of the soul were so little unfavorable to suicide that the church-father Lactantius had some show of right and truth on his side, when he did not scruple to give it as an axiom¹⁾ that just those classical pagan philosophers who believed in, and taught, the immortality of the soul destroyed themselves, i. e. considered suicide justifiable. Sundry objections may be fairly made to that portion of his discussion of what he calls „falsa sapientia“, in which the axiom we have alluded to is laid down. His assignment of faith in immortality to the various philosophers he enumerates is incorrect; his sweeping statement of the suicidal end of all ancient classical philosophers who believed in the soul's immortality, is erroneous; his specific allusion to Plato's *Phaedon* in connection with Cleombrotus and Cato, is unseasonable and inconclusive; and the materialist Democritus ought scarcely to have found a place here. But, though we may and must call into question individual items of Lactantius'

¹⁾ Opera omnia, edid. Buenemann, p. 363, 364, 366.

general verdict (vide §. 24, and Sect. V), it is, nevertheless, in general a true one, and the inference he draws: that everything depends upon the *conditions* promulgated of a felicitous immortality, is incontestibly wise and right. He intends to say that the view which classic Paganism took of the immortality of the soul proved rather an incentive to, than a preventive of, self-destruction, because it did not enunciate accurately, concisely, conspicuously this one principle: that only a dutiful life of work „as long as it is day“ could entitle man to expect a *blissful* lot in a future world. More impartial and better-instructed judges than our churchfather have uttered substantially the same opinion. Gibbon, for instance, on one occasion incidentally remarks with as much justice as acuteness. „We are sufficiently acquainted with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state.“ And, when discussing that well-known passage in Virgil's *Aeneis*, which treats of the unenviable and distressful fate of suicides in the realm of the Dead (vide §. 17), the same historian specifically observes: „the poetical fables of the infernal shades could not seriously influence the faith or practice of mankind.“¹⁾ Were further passing illustration or corroboration needed, we might add, for instance, that Silius Italicus, though a most enthusiastic admirer of Virgil's poetry, had not the slightest scruple about dying most deliberately by his own hand, when tortured by an incurable cancer;²⁾ that at and after the time when Virgil penned his epic, i. e. under the reigns of the first few Emperors, suicide was extremely frequent among the wisest and best of the Romans (vide §. 22).

2. Barbaric Paganism.

Odinism declared suicide one of the surest and most glorious paths to an honorable and a blissful place in the realm of spirits. Brachmanism does not fail to lure its adherents unto numerous kinds of voluntary death by promises of a tempting measure of felicity in the celestial mansions of Brahma. Indeed, whether we look to the West or to the East, to the right or to the left, the phenomenon of suicide

¹⁾ Vol. I, p. 272, and vol. IV, p. 237 of the *Decline and Fall*. The edition I have used, and to which I shall always refer, is Murray's second reprint with Milman's and Guizot's notes. ²⁾ Martial, lib. XI, epigr. 48 and epigr. 49; Pliny's epistles, lib. III, c. 7.

would seem to have been most usual just among such barbarous nations, taking „barbarous“ in the classical sense or literally, as entertained a strong and an impassioned belief in the immortality of the soul, more especially as regards that originally Eastern form which this belief assumed, viz. the transmigration of souls which is, doubtless, the most sensuous manner in which the continuance of the soul can be thought, but which, nevertheless, does not by any means exclude necessarily a belief in retribution in a yonder-state of existence too. Two or three quotations will suffice to prove this point. Solinus, the Roman grammarian in the 3rd cent. p. C., states what follows.¹⁾ „Nunc in Thraciam locus est pergere, et ad validissimas Europae gentes vela obvertere. Quas qui sedulo experiri velit, non difficulter deprehendet, Thracibus barbaris inesse contemptum vitae et ex quadam naturalis sapientiae disciplina. Concordant omnes ad interitum voluntarium, dum nonnulli eorum putant obeuntium animas reverti. Alii non extingui, sed beatas magis fieri.“ Montesquieu generalizes in the following manner.²⁾ „Presque par tout le monde, et dans tous les temps, l'opinion de l'immortalité de l'ame, mal prise, a engagé les femmes, les esclaves, les sujets, les amis, à se tuer, pour aller servir dans l'autre monde l'object de leur respect ou de leur amour.“ And Coccejus, having produced testimonies of the frequency of suicide on religious grounds among certain barbarous nations, pronounces the same opinion, though the motive he urges is of a totally different complexion.³⁾ „Causam hujus opinionis nullam aliam fuisse puto quam dogma de transmigratione animarum, ex ea enim doctrina inferri potest, hominem qui ob perpetuos dolores, vel alias ob causas taedio vitae captus finem vitae suae imponit, suo bono consulere, quia sperat animam mox in aliud robustius corpus transituram, et feliciorum conditionem obtenturam esse. Hanc enim rationem allegare solent ipsi gentiles, et praecipue Indiae philosophi; ita enim Xaverio rem explicat sacerdos Japonensis: les hommes, à proprement parler, ne meurent point: l'ame se dégage seulement du corps ou elle étoit enfermée; et tandis que ce corps pourrit dans la terre, elle en cherche un autres frais et vigoureux, où nous renaissions tantôt avec le sexe le plus noble, tantôt avec le sexe le plus imparfait.“

3. Islamism.

¹⁾ Memorabilia mundi, c. XVII, edid. Draud, 1603, vol. I, p. 573. ²⁾ Esprit des lois, liv. XXIV, ch. 19, and of. ch. 21. ³⁾ Grotius illustratus, 1741—48, p. 441. For his quotation he refers us to P. Bouchet, p. 78.

The Islām, however, does, literally and emphatically, denounce and interdict suicide — and it is the only „Religion“ which can be fairly said to do so — by proclaiming that divine displeasure will severely punish the suicide in a future state of existence, and this explicit prohibition has operated, and operates still, among the Moslem as an unmistakeable force against, and check upon, the deed of self-slaughter.

4. Judaism.

It would be a tedious and an endless task, were we to attempt to adduce, and comment on, all the affirmative and negative answers which both orthodox and heterodox Christian and Jewish writers on the Old Testament have given to the question: do the Hebrew scriptures really convey and inculcate a belief in the immortality of the soul? Simplest and wisest it will be, if we tell briefly and candidly what an unbiassed perusal of the documents at issue have yielded to us individually as our firm and clear conviction touching this matter; much profound erudition and much ingenious sophistry may be found in any given number of modern theological works. First of all, if we bear in mind the somewhat, nay, extremely, carnal character which is assigned to the Providence of God in the five first books of the O. T., the thoroughly temporal nature of the punishments as well as of the recompenses promulgated in Mosaism, and the, as far as mere express words are concerned, absolute silence about a future life, it really does appear that not a single vestige of the tenet of the immortality of the human soul is therein traceable, and every promulgation and prescription seems calculated and shaped merely to render the Israelites solely intent upon activity and efficacy in the sphere of the Worldly, upon physical longevity, earthly comfort, national conquest: Nor may we conceal from ourselves that even in those lyrical effusions of the Old Testament, many of which utter the deepest feelings and loftiest aspirations of the Hebrew soul with such beauty and earnestness as have rendered them the everlasting type of devotional minstrelsy in the Christian church, the Divine might and mercy are but too exclusively confined to what concerns man specifically before, but in no wise after, death.¹⁾ And most assuredly, there are sundry passages in the canonical writings of the Old Testament which manifestly and indisputably teach materialism in words

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. Psalms XXXIII, 18, 19; XXXIV, 10; XXXVII, 3.

as coarse, and for purposes as degrading, as ever did the lowest and weariest Epicurean sensualism.¹⁾ Nevertheless, though I am perfectly well aware how Hebrew grammar with its niceties and Hebrew lexicography with its uncertainties frequently interfere to check our becoming dogmatically positive in regard to the one or the other passage which seems to embody a more or less decisive and distinct vestige of the doctrine of the soul's immortality, I cannot but remain under the impression that much of what constitutes the import of the five books ascribed to Moses, much in the moral and ritual tenor of the entire Mosaic legislation (in Egypt, with the sacerdotal wisdom of which the Hebrew lawgiver was familiar, the tenet of the immortality of the soul was, certainly, held by the priests, even if withheld from the people), and various isolated and incidental passages (e. g. in the Book of Job and in the Psalms) indirectly and obscurely imply, assume, postulate, enunciate a genuine confidence in, or a fervent hope of, that immortality of the soul which, at a considerably later period,²⁾ the Jews would appear to have, *as a body*, avowed and enunciated, albeit we find still in the days of Jesus one of their most erudite and influential sects, the Sadducees, decidedly averse to the faith under mention.³⁾ But, for the application of what we have just stated to our immediate question. On the one hand, the scriptures of the Old Testament do not in any express or direct manner whatsoever interdict suicide by even the slightest reference to a punishment awaiting the departed in a future world; nay, indeed, sundry Jewish Rabbis — not to speak of sundry Christian moralists — have, doubtless, so understood and so interpreted their Canonical Books themselves, and the tenets and traditions based upon them, as to believe themselves justified in taking for granted that suicide under certain circumstances would entitle them to expect in the regions of immortality at the hands of Jehovah a prize of glory in reward of their self-wrought momentary mortal pain. And, on the other hand, though we certainly read of a few isolated instances of suicide among the Jews in the early periods of their history, suicide became very much more frequent among them, aye, startlingly frequent, in the days of e. g. Philo and Josephus, i. e. just at that time when the belief in the immortality of the soul would seem to

¹⁾ E. g. Ecclesiastes III, 19. ²⁾ Vide e. g. the Book of Wisdom, II, 23; III, 4; and the so-called fourth book of the Maccabees. ³⁾ Vide Luke XX, 27.

have impressed itself upon them as a most welcome theory, and to have diffused itself among them as an entirely undisputed fact.

5. Christianity.

It is self-evident even from what little has been incidentally ad-
duced, or alluded to, in this very § that mankind was not by any
means doomed to tarry until the appearance and ministration of Jesus
of Nazareth, before it could and did conceive and believe the human
soul to be possibly, or probably, or indubitably of immortal essence;
and that meaningful word (2 Tim. I, 10) about our Saviour Jesus
Christ's having „brought life and immortality to light through the
gospel“ must not, as far as mere doctrine is concerned, be under-
stood absolutely, but only relatively. Indeed, I doubt somewhat,
whether doctrine be here meant specifically, or at all, if we pay due
attention to the context; for, surely, the „abolishing of death“, which
is affirmed of the Saviour in this very verse, is (if we compare also
vv. 9 and 12) something more and deeper than the mere teaching
or demonstrating of the immortality of the soul; it is something
kindred to the taking away of „the sting of death“ by that atoning
act which Theology calls Redemption, something kindred to the im-
planting of that principle of „love“ which is said „to cast out fear“,
aye, the fear of death. Yet, since „the gospel“ is also expressly
mentioned as a medium („through“), and it (Evangel, glad tidings)
must, I presume, be understood of the *word*, as well as of the *work*,
of the New Covenant, we are called upon to assume that likewise
doctrinally, as well as really, Christianity has helped mankind on-
wards and upwards in the question of the soul's immortality. Of
course, there are many lengthy volumes of ancient and modern date
which discuss the manner of this matter with erudite sophistry, and
many short sermons of ancient and modern date which enforce it
with impassioned zeal. But, for my own part, I have long ago upon
principle foregone the toil of reading them, having convinced myself
that conviction must be sought, if it can be found anywhere, in the
individual soul itself, and not in finely spun arguments which often
rather confuse than enlighten, rather disappoint than satisfy, rather
tire and baffle than animate and edify. Therefore, even the reply of
Jesus (Luke XX, 37, 38) to the captious question of the sceptical
Sadducees which silenced, but did not convert, them; and Paul's in-
ferential argumentation from Christ's own resurrection (1 Cor. XV),
have not — for reasons I will not, because I need not, now stop

to assign and develop — appeared to me the basis upon which Christianity placed the fact of the soul's immortality, or the soil in which it planted the faith in that fact. Also in regard to suchlike utterances it would seem possible to me to ponder and speculate, analyze and synthesize one's self into nebulous dimness or midnight darkness. There still stands in this earth-garden for tried and tempted man a tree of life beside the tree of knowledge; and, if he have found the fruit of the latter worm-eaten in its abstractions, then let him stretch forth his hand to pluck the fresher produce of the former, and gain from it a foretaste of the fact that he „shall live for ever.“ Aye, it is, I humbly think and devoutly feel, into the life of the soul through, with, in God that we must look for our warrant and surety of immortality; the individual soul itself must, as it were, step forward and bear testimony of itself unto itself, and such testimony cannot be unheard, cannot be disbelieved.

We know that Jesus did not himself pen in systematic philosophical shape arguments of any kind. The words he spake, brief and striking, hovered so solemnly out of divinest heights and floated so gently into the depths of the human heart that, in their mightful immediateness, they seemed to evoke new life in the hearers. Nor did he even bid his disciples write down the axioms and principles of religion and morality he uttered. He only bade them preach and spread them from ear to ear, and lip to lip, and city to city, and land to land, that on the foundation of their lofty significance and life-welling power a holy communion of God-reverencing spirits might rise up among those who sought the „Unknown God.“ But more than this. What Jesus himself felt, believed, taught, knew to be Everlasting Truth, he prayerfully lived unto and sufferingly died for, countenancing from first to last an upward look unto celestial reward and eternal glory as a sustaining, nay, even an instigating, influence (Hebr. XII, 2), ignoring all such would-be sublimated ethico-religious theories as would fain, not without much fallacy in argument and much hypocrisy in profession, snatch from man Hope and Fear in reference to a future world and state, as though they were not legitimate springs of religious life, and necessary motives for moral action, if the mind is to be upheld in energy and the heart to be shielded against apathy. And his immediate disciples proclaimed what they heard from him, and told of his life and death, and imitated his example in defiance of scorn and torture, ignominy and a cross.

Thus it was that a Sower, graciously sent from above, joyfully went forth to sow — the seed, of the „life everlasting“ (ζωὴ αἰώνιος) (John XVII, 3; Rom. VI, 23), of „Life and Immortality“, on the pathways of our earth, into the minds and hearts of the children of men; and all they who were *baptized into his nature*, as well as „baptized in his name“, received an energy of world-overcoming faith, a passion of eternity-embracing love, an anchor of death-outriding hope. But yet, experimental and dynamic, not theoretical and mechanical, is also the Christian's belief in the immortality of the soul. It originates, grows, manifests itself from within, subjectively, not from without, objectively. Also in reference to it the kingdom of Heaven cometh not „with outward shew“ (Luke XVII, 20), but „suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force“ (Matth. XI, 12); and as is each individual soul's idiosyncrasy, so is its peculiar kind of force: by humility he, and he by energy, by thought he, and he by love, by grief he, and he by joy „taketh the kingdom of Heaven“, i. e. evolves and develops the soul's deepest and holiest life, awakens, confirms, endears in himself spirit-consciousness of a union with „the Father of Spirits“, and not only fervently desires that such union may continue, but likewise with childlike boldness assumes that it will be indissoluble, and that, when the Spiritual in man shall have cast off the clayey tenement which was its familiar companion and disciplinary helpmate on earth, the *former*, liberated into brighter light and nobler life, will forthwith seek and find a „mansion prepared“ (John XIV, 2, 3) for renewed activity, invigorated efficacy, loftier duty, purer felicity, whether the *latter* be gradually dissolved and scattered into primeval atoms, or, be it soon, be it late, rise again in beautified and glorified identity. Thus, at least, I understand that *πῶς*, which Christ propounds and postulates: „and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent“; and thus that emphasis on the present tense which is palpable in the words of the same highest teacher of ours: „he that believeth in me *hath* everlasting life“; „he that believeth on me is passed from death unto life.“ There is, therefore, in verity from the highest and genuine *religious* standing-point only *one* world; and to think, feel, believe otherwise is of folly, not of wisdom, and may mislead, nay, often has misled. For, if the kingdom of Heaven, i. e. Christianity, be really to a human soul *only* a thing of „outward shew“, a bare forceless theorem, a mere ignis fatuus of custom

or fashion, leading nowhither exactly, I see no reason why, despite all speculative dogmatics and positive catechisms, despite „mystic visions“ and „dreamy revelations“ touching the spirit-world, the „World-History“ should not still remain to a multitude of nominal Christians the „World-Judgment“, i. e. a perfectly sufficient harmonization, solution and termination of whatsoever is.¹⁾ Or, is it not in perfect accordance with a tangibly and an eternally true law that neither subtle „Analogies“ nor pathetic „Closing Scenes“ are likely to be able to keep that soul from sinking and losing itself in the Present and the Sensuous which has never suffered itself to be excited and employed towards rising and soaring above the Worldly and Earthy, and which has become weaker and dimmer and ever weaker and dimmer in self-balance and self-insight? We will not pry into the secrets of the hearts of our cotemporaries and countrymen, or betray what many have confessed to us in familiar intercourse, or sharply cross-examine some of those who live by preaching and teaching the words of the New Covenant; but, methinks, James Martineau²⁾ and Thomas Carlyle³⁾ are right about the position of many modern Christians to the belief in the immortality of the soul, when they write as follows. „They have allowed that poisonous notion of enjoyment as the end of life absolutely to stifle the higher soul, and suppress in them the belief in its existence.“ — „A soul of a man, appointed for spinning cotton and making money, or alas for merely shooting grouse and gathering rent, to whom Eternity and Immortality, and all human Noblenesses and divine Facts that did not tell upon the stock-exchange, were meaningless fables empty as the inarticulate wind.“

Be, however, the way in which the Christian can convince himself of the immortality of the soul of what kind it may, it is equally certain that, on the one hand, the documents of Christianity make the faith in the immortality of the soul a *sine qua non* of the belief in christianity itself, and that, on the other hand, the said documents do not connect with the said faith any positive and express interdiction of suicide; and, thence, sundry christian writers have ex-

¹⁾ The reader will, probably, discover for himself that the words in inverted commas allude to the writings of e. g. Swedenborg and Jung Stilling, and to Schiller's youthful poem *Resignation*, with which latter cf. *Diod. Sik. lib. XVIII, c. 59 in fin.* ²⁾ The watch-night lamps, p. 36. ³⁾ The stump-orator, p. 43.

pressly advocated suicide who have as expressly vindicated the immortal nature of the soul. This in a theoretical point of view. And, practically, though we cannot reasonably doubt for one single moment that, taking all in all, christianity's genial and effulgent light has shed abroad the belief in the immortality of the soul among its professors in an infinitely greater degree and proportion than ever any form or school of classical paganism did, none of us need be told that, nevertheless, even in our own days of religious efforts and educational exertions suicide is proportionately far more frequent in the capitals of Europe than it ever was either at Athens or Rome, and that it has never ceased to occur at any period of the sway of the gospel. To say that the christians who slay themselves, though they may publicly profess to believe in the soul's immortality, covertly disbelieve it, were a more than rash assertion. It would be, doubtless, true of some, perchance, even of many. Here, in illustration, a few brief extracts from the diaries and letters of one of the most remarkable modern suicides known to me. I allude to Carl von Hohenhausen who shot himself in the 18th year of his age, whilst a student at Bonn anno 1834. „Und ist Vernichtung vielleicht eine Strafe meines Fehltrittes, so ist diese Strafe die höchste Wohlthat, welche mir je erwiesen wurde. — Ich hatte an diesem Leben schon zu viel, was soll mir die Unsterblichkeit? Lange zu bereuen habe ich nicht Lust. Ich verlange nicht Verzeihung, nur Vernichtung, denn ich beging eine Nothsünde. — Aber nun soll die größte Tyrannei, die ich kenne, die Unsterblichkeit, mich trösten!!! — Ob wir uns wohl wiedersehen? Ich hoffe nicht. Die Idee der Unsterblichkeit gewährt mir keinen Trost; mir waren achtzehn Jahre schon zu viel. — Daß es einen Zustand des Nichts wirklich geben muß, wird Niemand bestreiten; sonst könnten wir nicht entstanden sein.“ With which last sentiment or inference cf. his strangely striking last written soliloquy.¹⁾ But yet, it would be true of by far the smaller number, as anybody may easily convince himself, who will be at the trouble to peruse carefully the last written declarations of several hundreds of recent suicides which Dr. de Boismont has collected and communicated.²⁾

Thus far in brief reply to the immediate question from and with which we had started. There remains, however, one point in „Re-

¹⁾ Carl von Hohenhausen. Der Untergang eines siebenzehnjährigen Jünglings, 1835, pp. 139, 147, 160, 177, 178, 199. ²⁾ In the Journal of psychological medicine and mental pathology, edited by Winslow, April 1, 1851, p. 234ff.

ligion“, one element in the faith in Immortality which we dare not overlook or leave wholly undiscussed even in this merely introductory Chapter, since without it Religion would seem not to exist, and to be impossible, and without it faith in Immortality as regards the *Yonder* would appear to lack much, nay, all, of its significance and support as regards the *Here*.

§. 4. The relation of Divine Providence to Suicide.

I alluded, of course, to *God*.

First of all, we will remark that christian thinkers, when discussing any ethical question whatsoever, almost invariably view and treat the ideas of God and Immortality as correlatives, as spiritual facts conditioning each the other, and, vice versa, in similar manner usually represent Atheism and Materialism as a twin-birth of orde and the same maternal Unfaith or Pseudo-faith. However, the methods and results of the speculations of classical Paganism do not warrant this assumption of a necessary nexus between the two as an absolute postulate of the human mind; and, in general, though a belief in the immortality of the soul would seem to imply somewhat naturally a belief in the existence of the Deity, I doubt very much, whether a belief in the latter can be said, in an equal measure and for the very same reason, to demand a belief in the former. *God may be*; and yet we have no right to assume that, if He was unwilling or unable to adjust matters here according to our notions of justice and benevolence, He will or can do so hereafter. *God may be*; and yet creature-man has not really any claim upon his maker, has not any „title to the skies“ and his „grief“ and his „discontent“ — about which Young rather declaims poetically than reasons soberly ¹⁾ — may be just as well hushed along with his terrestrial lot in the silence of perennial death as they appeared to be left unheeded in the rolling and rapid movement of earthly life. *God may be*; and yet not a „solitary“ God, though the rational inhabitants of our speck of the globe should be doomed to perish; for, perchance, worthier and more favored spirits of other worlds have been already selected as the companions of His Eternity. — Thus, for instance, Count Struensee, a person familiar to every Englishman who has read the

¹⁾ Night Thoughts, VII, 220, 52, 53, 466, 520, 947 ff.

sad story of the British Princess Matilda on the throne of Denmark, acknowledged and adored a Supreme Being, albeit he considered that, when man died, there was nothing more for him either to hope or to fear.¹⁾ Nevertheless, if the reader will revert to the somewhat lengthy quotations I have made in the preceding § from Maupertuis and Garve, he may find that they, whilst asserting the checking and interdictory influence of the *belief in the immortality of the soul* upon suicide, place in immediate juxta-position to it, as a correspondent link in the same chain, the *belief in God*. Various other modern thinkers have assigned to the latter link a still more prominent and specific bearing upon our subject. Examples. Herder, when speaking of the suicide of Brutus, exclaims:²⁾ Nichts blieb dir übrig, als dein eigener Stahl, eine traurige und doch nothwendige Zuflucht der Unglücklichen unter einem Römischen Schicksal. De Wette, when discussing the self-inflicted deaths of Arria and Otho, after having accorded to both the meed of magnanimity, proceeds thus:³⁾ und doch widerspricht Etwas dem christlichen Gefühle: es ist die Demuth, die das Leben, das wir vom Schöpfer empfangen haben, und in dessen Anfang, Dauer und Ende wir besonders unsere Abhängigkeit von Gott fühlen, nicht willkürlich wie ein anderes Mittel wegwerfen, der Schickung nicht vorgreifen, zwar gern leiden, aber die Leiden aus der Hand Gottes empfangen will. Loebell, when narrating the celebrated end of the career of Cato of Utica, expresses himself in the following manner.⁴⁾ Die Republik allein umfaßte nach seiner Ansicht alle eines Mannes würdige Wirksamkeit; sie dürfe, wie er meinte, Keiner überleben, der die Größe des Verlustes zu würdigen wisse. In edlen Gemüthern kann eine feige Liebe zum Leben und seinen Genüssen eine solche That nicht hindern; bessere Einsicht vermöchte es, aber in seine Seele drang kein Strahl von dem Troste, welchen die Ueberzeugung gewährt, sich den Beschlüssen der göttlichen Weltregierung gefügt zu haben. The assertion, then, in these passages is to the following effect: a right belief, or belief at all, in a Divine Providence, inasmuch as it would have effectually prevented a Brutus, an Arria, an Otho, a Cato from committing suicide, must be viewed in the abstract as prohibitory of, and antidotal to, self-destruction.

We see, in the first place, that the idea of God is here palpably

¹⁾ Vide Crichton, *Converts from Infidelity*, vol. I, p. 119. ²⁾ Ideen zur Weltgeschichte, B. II, p. 199 in Luden's edit. ³⁾ Sittenlehre (vide further on). ⁴⁾ Herder's Weltgeschichte, Th. III, p. 165.

conceived as synonymous with that of *Divine Providence*. The question is palpably not about His nature, but solely about His functions on earth and His relations to man. Very properly so, as regards our immediate topic. With a definition, and — I wish to speak reverentially, not flippantly — an anatomization, of God we are not now and here concerned; we have not to busy ourselves with Pantheism, Theism, Deism, or a tripartite and triune Godhead, and all those hair-splitting distinctions which the various Schools first invented, and then disputed about, each imagining that it knew best and knew everything. We are, rather, called upon to discuss the deep and sacred word God only in that sense in which it presents itself to us most salutarily-intelligibly and practically-effectively in our temporal sphere of being, mindful of the beautiful exhortation from the lips of the Preacher on the Mount: „consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin“ (Luke XII, 27); and to enquire: has the belief in Divine Providence, as far as its rationale lies historically before us, and as far as we are cognizant of its psychological results, produced those anti-suicidal influences and effects which have been predicated of it as a more or less inherent necessity? Here again I must remind the reader that the following brief positions are only rapid glances at what we shall learn more about on later occasions.

1. Non-Christianism.

In classical Mythology, the faith in a special divine Providence, as regards the duration of man's temporal existence, may be said to have clothed itself in that personified Moera which cut the thread of life, just as one of the Northern Nornes was ordained to perform the same office for mortal man; yet, as o'er the dreary heaths and fir-clad hills of ancient Scandinavia the portals of Odin's Hall were ever open to admit the troops of heroes and of the aged and the sick who sought an entrance therein by the deed of self-inflicted death, so the annals of the frivolous, be they cheerful or be they gloomy, myths of Greece (and Rome) swarm with suicidal narratives. It is true, on the one hand, that, according to the theory of the Pythagoreans, the Godhead having appointed man's term of probation on earth, man shall not abridge it on pain of His displeasure; that, according to the teaching of Socrates, since the Divinity might be assumed to authorize self-destruction only by the immediate injunctions of the Magistracy, He would visit it in all other instances with a severe pe-

nalty, even as though a slave had fled from the service of his lawful master; and that, according to the tenets of the Neo-Platonists, God having established a compact of mutual parting between soul and body by the process of natural death, man may not suicidally render the separation of the one from the other a ruffling scene of violence, except, perchance, when insanity had already disturbed and destroyed the genial harmony. But it is, on the other hand, equally true that the Epicureans, admitting a Godhead, and denying to Him interference with, or concern about, the affairs of mankind, esteemed self-destruction so noble a prerogative of man that the Gods themselves might envy him for it; that the Stoic teachers introduced to their disciples a Divinity speaking unto the human spirit as a military commander addresses the soldier in his host, and oftentimes bidding him to retire voluntarily from the battle-field of life; and that the somewhat eclectically inclined younger Seneca even endeavored, in one and the same treatise „de Providentia“ to demonstrate and enforce the existence of a Divine Providence and, at the same time, man's liberty and right to dispose of his own life, whensoever he might list. Thus, whereas sundry schools, or forms, of Greek and Roman Paganism directed the belief in the existence of a Divine Providence against suicide, others, indisputably, employed it in favor of suicide; and, we may observe, though the fiery prophet of Arabia taught his followers that Allah's decrees pre-appoint and pre-arrange even the most trivial events of life, and, of course, a fortiori the season of *its* issue, this his system of Fatalism did not in any wise prevent *him*, as we have already said, from repeatedly promulgating and inculcating in terms most emphatic and explicit the divine disapproval and interdiction of suicide. Thus, in systems and creeds non-christian the affirmation and acknowledgment of a Divine Providence per se would not by any means appear either theoretically to prohibit, or practically to prevent, suicide. Everything, rather, would seem naturally and necessarily to depend, as in the matter of Immortality, on the *kind* of idea man forms and realizes unto himself of the nature, purpose, efficacy of the Divinity in its relation to the Cosmos, the Microcosmos as well as the Macrocosmos.

2. Christianity.

To some persons among us it will, perhaps, appear of little value or moment how a Voltaire or a Jean Jacques Rousseau positioned themselves to this portion of our enquiry; it will be objected that

the modern high-priest of negation and persiflage no less than the modern defender of unhallowed passions and barbarism's gospel were only nominally christians, and are not entitled by any means to a vote on things pertaining to Christianity. It is true, their conception of christianity may not be yours, O Reader, nor is it mine; yet they too were Christians more, at least, than they were aught else, and, if we would but read all they have written and examine it carefully, we might, perchance, discover that their warfare against the Church of their respective countries and the Spirit of their respective times was, perchance, after all a more sacred cause than that which many „a holy alliance“ has undertaken, and that the weapons with which they fought, though dipped in sarcasm most bitter and spleen wellnigh mad, were, nevertheless, purer and nobler than many of their antagonists' which were tempered with human gore and poisoned with fiendish falsehood. It is easy to blacken a name, it is easy to condemn a book, as easy as it is to lead a thinker to the stake, and put his works in the index expurgatorius; more difficult it is to understand clearly and judge righteously the prominent minds of any age, and to peruse and refute what they had to say and did say. This by the way, and for the purpose of intimating that the testimonies of Voltaire and Rousseau ought here to be received. Voltaire wrote a didactic poem on the earthquake of Lisbon, which contains the most startling and violent attack upon the existence of and belief in a Divine Providence I recollect having ever read; yet the only line in it which could by any possibility be strained into a vindication of suicide has been expunged in the edition before me, and figures merely in the foot-notes as an earlier reading;¹⁾ and, what is more decisive, Voltaire was not by any means (vide §. 18) a defender of suicide, he was, at least, certainly not designedly one. Rousseau wrote an essay (*épître à Voltaire*) on this very *Poème sur le desastre de Lisbonne*,²⁾ in which he endeavored to repel and refute the attacks his cotempo-

¹⁾ *Oeuvres complètes*, T. XII, p. 107 ff. ²⁾ I may incidentally here remark that we now-a-days can scarcely form any adequate idea of the overwhelmingly startling impression which the said tragical occurrence (Nov. 1, 1755) produced at that time upon the minds of men in the whole of civilized Europe. Thus we learn that it almost brought the notions of the boy Goethe about the kindness and justice of God into wavering, and for the first time deeply shook his tranquillity of mind. Vide his *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Buch I and the commencement of Buch II.

rary and friend had made upon Divine Providence, but the citizen and philosopher of Geneva, whilst expressing his own most lively and unshakeable belief in its existence, puts forth in the same breath his own creed that, nevertheless, man is authorized to march off the stage of life by self-wrought violence (vide §. 21). However, let us approach our topic in a more general as well as a more searching manner.

First of all, a parallel based upon history and fact. Whensoever the frivolities, the misdeeds, the cruelties of our fellow-man carry on sport with human life, and make the existence of a breathing rational Ego appear a thing light, cheap, insignificant on this fair earth; when, for instance, the proscriptions of the rugged Marius, of the subtle Sylla, of the wildly furious first Triumvirs, and gladiatorial games, and imperial edicts swept away myriads in Italy; when in Germany a war of thirty years and a war of seven years trampled thousands upon thousands into the dust of a premature death; when in France Egalité-guillotines and Corsican glories poured out human blood as though it had been mere colored water: then in Italy, Germany, France suicide was more frequent, far more frequent than at other times; for rather than wait to be unjustly and violently sent to death, many voluntarily anticipated their doom. Whensoever He, the Alpha and Omega of Life, the *Life*, as it were, κατ' ἐξοχήν,¹⁾ rides on the whirlwind's wings, or treads the ocean with tempest-foot, or rolls up valley and hill with earthquake-hand, or enters the cities and huts of men in the spectre-shroud of pestilence and famine, so that the virtuous and wicked, the strong and weak, the fresh and weary, the young and old, the wise and untutored, the useful and useless are suddenly hurled troop-wise into one universal grave, as if their earthly existence were of no value in His sight (when, for instance, the Great Plague prevailed in London): at such seasons many are apt to ween that the current notions of the worth and sanctity of an individual existent human unit are exaggerated, superstitious, prideful, unwarranted and set at nought by the doings of the most High who thus locks up the womb, and unlocks the tomb, of our race; and then a certain measure of indifference to life is apt

¹⁾ Some etymologists affirm, and not without reason I believe, that θεός, Ζεύς, Deus are = ζῶν, vide Keightley's *Mythology of the Greeks and Romans*, p. 62, note. Diodorus Sikulus (lib. III, c. 61) refers the Koptic Thot to the same root and meaning.

seek and find a resting-place and a rock-foundation for unconditional subjection and humble resignation to the absolute will of the Everlasting God; and, though I have undertaken to write explicité only about suicide, I will not conceal that I would gladly be implicité writing also at it; in other words, albeit we are chiefly concerned in what has been said in ancient and modern times to and fro for and against suicide, in all those most strangely discordant tunes which will apparently never cease to be played upon this most painful and difficult theme of ours, we would desire ever and anon to utter our own say likewise on the matter itself and draw attention to its weighty practical bearings. „Not for School, but for Life we learn“, is a well-known saying of Seneca's; and, not for School only, but for Life also I now write this Treatise, and should rejoice, if but one of our fellow-beings were to be prevented from *deliberate* and *conscious* self-slaughter by the perusal of it. — We know what sort and measure of faith in God's Providence Jesus of Nazareth taught,¹⁾ and we know, too, how the whole tone of his temper, the entire tenor of his conduct, his heart's deepest core bore evidence, vigorous, transparent, fervent of his acting in perfect accordance with the belief which he promulgated and prescribed; and all I can think, feel, say is this: let us adopt the spirit of his precepts, and walk in the footsteps of his example. On the sea of Time, O Brother-man and Sister-woman, thy life's skiff floats and mine; sooner or later, perchance, the winds will howl, or the mists gather, or the lightnings flash, and fears and tears may veil to our dim vision the rescuing haven, whether it be far or near: then, haply, some fellow-voyager of ours, or, some inward tempting voice, might counsel us to seek freedom from suspense and suffering by leaping rashly into the Ocean of the Yonder; but, though our confidence be derided and our hopes scoffed at, let us not allow our courage to be damped: gazing with boldly calm eye on the dreary, dangerous waste of waters that environs us, let us toil, trust, adore to the last, believing that a God who is Father and a Father who is God watches over us, marking our way and holding our hand, and will, if it be good and best for us, let the joyful sound of „land! land!“ burst upon our ear, ere the overwhelming moment shall have yet arrived. — Many, thus tossed and tried and tempted, have acted thus, even

1) E. g. Math. VI, 23—34; X, 29—31; XXV, 14—30.

the *Elect* of mind, heart, conscience and culture, I ween, in every age, land and creed of the Christian church, the hero-martyrs and the martyr-heroes, a glorious „cloud of witnesses“, and have again trodden the shore amid light and love, and have discovered, acknowledged, left on record that even on earth the forecasting spirit of a devout and valiant soul deceiveth not, that roseate portals open at last to those who have pilgrimed on thorny paths, and that direst tribulations work out at length an „exceeding weight of glory“ unto the triumphant believer in the Might and the Mercy of the God of Jesus. —

Yet I well know, too, that this is not exactly a theme for Polemics; such belief in the special providence of a personal God is not by any means everybody's gift or grace, and is, perchance, rather of the heart than of the head. The Pantheist, representative of a very numerous class of christians in the present day, more especially in Germany, openly and boldly avows his firm and full non-belief in a Personal God, and his shrinking from confining the Divine in any manner or measure whatsoever within the sensuously formal limits of space and time. Unto him, however, if he but be of the deeper and purer sort, there is no danger of confounding Right and Wrong, of destroying the distinctive mark between Good and Evil, of casting off allegiance to even the most rigorous demands of individual morality. For him there still exists as the Divinity, though not a world-ruling power from without, yet an eternal law of order and necessity working and manifesting itself with untiring force, and plastic skill, and progressive beauty in the interior of the world's organism, in all physical and intellectual Nature. His creed travails with reasonings most abstruse and diction most obscure to the uninitiated; but we can comprehend, and testify, that also out of it there may come and have come, by dint of almost irresistible and necessary spiritual and logical appropriateness, an unconditional obedience to the laws of life, an heroic resignation to life's institutions and dispensations, a victorious rising by self-control above the in-born imperfections of the individual soul, a meek bowing beneath the most high Spiritual Essence which is omni-presently immanent in the Universe, and a faithful enacting to the end of that part which has been assigned to each upwards attracted and impelled human soul in the great drama of humanity's history, in order that the Infinite and Absolute Spirit or Idea which is *above all* may become

incarnate in Time and Mankind, and develop, realize and reveal itself, until *It* be veritably „All in All“. ¹⁾ — Type of a still more numerous class of christians in all ages is the modern Pietist or Quietist, whose conception of divine providence is the extreme opposite of that of Pantheism. Childlike, fervent, watchful, he neither speculates nor murmurs, but humbly receives whatsoever comes as the Good, patiently awaits what may follow as the Better, and steadfastly looks forward to the future in Heaven as the Best, as rest from his toil, and the prize of his discipline. To him it even almost appears as if for him alone the Shepherd of Israel wakes, the Bridegroom of the Soul loves. Ordinary appointments avail not against his prayers; special interpositions may avert for him the course of human probabilities. He hears angel-voices out of the most trivial blessings; he sees the finger of God, and feels the chastisement of the Heavenly Father, in the consequences of his every failing, in the effects of his every folly. The World is *his* most especial school; and the Godhead is Guide and Guardian specifically to *him*. However puerile or arrogant much in suchlike Mysticism may and must appear to many of us, yet we would fain not laugh, or even smile, at it: the most beautiful souls have dreamt and still dream this winsome dream; and the enigma of life puzzles them not, and the veil of Death they are never tempted to lift: in sabbath-rest they pass through Time into Eternity. — But far from the holy simplicity of Pietism or the sublime strength of Pantheism, is Mechanism and Hypocrisy, characteristic of infinitely the greatest number of christians in our own day, and particularly in our own land, with their sickly cant, sanctimonious slang, and spasmodically spectral pseudo-eloquence. What dost thou believe as thy divine Providence, O thou most cut and dried orthodox and decorous fellow-mortal of mine? Look more closely at what thou callest thy belief in a Divine Providence, I pray thee. That a pound sterling, duly stamped and of full weight, is resolvable into twenty shillings or two hundred and forty pence on change, in a shop, at the market! That thou canst shape thy own life and rule the lives of others by speculations and ingenuities, tricks and lies! That worldly interest is the measure of conscience, and the frown of Fashion more terrible than the voice of Judgment! That whining sentimentalities, multi-

¹⁾ 1 Cor. XV, 18: ἵνα ἡ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πάντων.

plied church-goings and babbled creeds are fit and full substitutes for the „worship of sorrow“, „the abnegation of self“, „the bearing of the cross“, „the hidden life with Christ in God!“ A Christian only, I ween, by the accident of birth and the formality of an inefficacious rite, thou dost really, like the Stoics of old, *deify* thy own fancies and impulses, greeds and passions, follies and iniquities. Why, then, mock thyself by feigning to believe in the providence of an objective Deity who bids thee and me, if we have done ill, understand and feel that righteous judgments are the legitimate and necessary means for preventing us from doing still worse, and that, even if we have done well, severe trials must be patiently borne that we may be purified and strengthened for doing better. Manlier, methinks, and more consistent it would be, wert thou candid and bold, like yon coarse, though learned, murderer whom a fashionable novel-writer of our day (Bulwer) has *semi-apotheosized*. Eugene Aram, prior to opening his veins, when in the condemned cell, confessed this confession: „the courses of my life I swayed with my own hand; from my own hand shall come the manner and moment of my death.“¹⁾ Thy hollow babblements about a wordy creed will not deceive God, and thy unmeaning homage to a Divine Providence merely disgusts man. Therefore, when aught becomes entangled in thy life-woof, set about disentangling it at once by thy own cleverness and strength alone; and, if thy efforts should chance to fail, hew the knot forthwith in twain: aye, like those

„That deal with life as children with their play,
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away.“

§. 5. The term Self-murder.

Among the English and French, the words self-murder and *meurtre (volontaire) de soi-même* were extremely frequent a century or so ago, but they have now become almost obsolete. Among our Teutonic brethren, however, the synonymous expression *Selbstmord* (or *Selbstmorb*) has still remained as by far the most usual designation of the act we are discussing; and as in English self-murder, so in German *Selbstmord*, is generally conceived and employed as notionally identical with self-slaughter (suicide), *Selbsttödtung*. We need

¹⁾ Criminal Recorder, 1804, vol. I, s. v. Aram.

not on this occasion lay any stress upon the circumstance that, in all probability, but few terms in any language, terms of importance and significance at least, can be supposed to have been originally quite synonymous, though time and usage, by obscuring or weakening their primal and legitimate import, may gradually and ultimately have caused many of them to appear so. Let us, rather, at once examine the word before us upon its own ground. The verbs to kill or slay and töbten, just like e. g. occidere (caedere), πορεύσθαι, simply denominate a *physical act*, and do not by any means imply a *moral verdict*. Thence, we might unhesitatingly apply the terms self-slaughter, Selbsttödtung to the act under discussion, though we were to regard it as not criminal, as even heroic and virtuous. The verbs to murder, morben, on the contrary, convey not only the notion of depriving of life, or even of doing so suddenly, violently, designedly, but additionally take in the by-notion of doing so in a manner unauthorized, illegal, criminal. Consequently, the terms self-murder, Selbstmord would seem to assume and predicate the *sinfulness* of the deed at issue. Therefore, if the Moralist deem suicide equal in point of culpability to the murder of another, in essence the very same thing as it, or even something still more criminal than it: then the terms self-murder, Selbstmord would naturally suggest themselves as the most expressive and appropriate ones he could employ. If, on the contrary, he should incline to view the deed of which we are speaking as one which calls rather for compassion than for condemnation, or, as one which is not decidedly unpermitted, or, as one which is even perfectly consistent with reason, duty, religion: then those terms would seem to me somewhat out of season and character. An *apology* for self-murder grates upon our ear almost like a linguistic disharmony, like a sort of contradictio in adjecto; yet e. g. Fries (vide Sect. V) invariably employs the term Selbstmord, whilst urging the excusability of the action.

This definite, restricted, pregnant *ethical import* of the words murder, morben is, indubitably, assigned to them by current usage now-a-days, in opposition to kill or slay and töbten. For instance, our vulgar adage that „killing is no murder“ is intelligible even to the most illiterate, and manifestly conveys that, though all murder be of necessity killing, yet all killing is not of equal necessity murder, the latter being rather only the darkest and grimmest guise which the former can assume, only the most forbidding and most

forbidden garb in which it can clothe itself. Or, let us illustrate modern linguistic usage in direct connexion with our immediate topic. If a person should have caused his own death violently and, according to human computation, prematurely by some accident originating in want of caution or even in culpable neglect; or, if a patriot or martyr should have omitted to use the natural, legitimate, prudential means of rescuing his life from the clutches of relentless tyranny or the flames of still more remorseless bigotry; or, if a drunkard, a roudé should have recklessly or even systematically brought on death by excess of sensual indulgence; or, if a miser should have denied to himself the necessities for subsistence; or, if a monomaniac should have refused the medicinal preservatives of life; or, if a student should have sapped and shattered his constitution by unremitting zeal and toil: — in each and all of these cases, though I am, of course, very far from affirming their exact equality morally, we might and could say: he has „killed“ himself; but a certain linguistic instinct, delicacy of feeling, and soundness of judgment would induce us to shrink from saying: he has „murdered“ himself. We must, however, bear in mind that we are now speaking only of the practical distinction between murdering and killing which exists at present, not of any primary difference resting upon an etymological base, if the words at issue be historically investigated; for originally no such specific evil signification attached to the words *Mord*, murder as to imply an act divinely or humanly prohibited, or even an act characterized by wantonness and brutality. Webster and Heyse (in their meritorious dictionaries of their respective mother-tongues, sub vv. murder, *Mord*) content themselves with referring us to the Latin *mors*, death; by so doing they do not exhibit to us a radical notion, but only a kindred vocable; yet, if we follow up the hint thus given, we might arrive at some little clearness; for I incline to believe that *mord* and *mors* are originally really identical. Persian proveably belongs to the great family of the Indo-Germanic languages, according to everything I have read on the subject (and German historians, when discussing the affinity of their own language with that of ancient Persia, occasionally lay stress upon that well-known passage in Herodotos where a Persian tribe is called *γερμανοί*); well, in turning to Richardson's Persian Dictionary (Vol. II, p. 507), I find the meaning of *to die* assigned to the verb *murdu*, *مردن*, and again, on consulting Adelung's elaborate, though anti-

quoted, critical Dictionary of German, I find s. v. that *Mord* originally signified in ancient High German death, then violent death, and subsequently every sort of slaying, even magisterial putting to death (execution), before it assumed its present current meaning of secret, assassin-like killing.¹⁾

Here, however, two things at once strike us, viz. the transition of the word at issue out of an intransitive meaning into a transitive one, and its transition out of a natural and an innocent meaning into a conventional and criminalistic one. As regards the first point, it need not in the least surprise us, since one and the same verb or noun in the Teutonic languages, e. g. in our own vernacular, is very frequently both intransitive and transitive, often, indeed, with some more or less distinct modification of form, but far more frequently without any form-alteration at all. It seems a peculiar privilege of the Semitic languages to be able to produce transitive out of intransitive meaning by dint of conjugational inflection (cf. e. g. the Piel and Hiphil in Hebrew), whereas in the Indo-Germanic language-tribe, as far as I am acquainted with its various offsprings (e. g. the ancient classical languages and modern German and English), often a distinct word would have to be coined for the designation of the transitive reference: wherefore, it was judged more convenient to take the already existent intransitive word and superadd to it a transitive power. And, as regards the second point, many words in every language have traceably undergone a similar change, as the notions, manners, and laws of peoples have changed. Of course, etymology cannot be expected to be „prophetic“, and we know that usage is a „tyrant“. Original significations give way to arbitrary definitions, more especially, perhaps, in legal terminologies, and such definitions are in their turn records and witnesses of altered convictions, customs, institutions. We, therefore, believe *mord*, murder to have primarily signified merely death, then — the causing of death, and ultimately, — the immoral and illegal causing of death, suchlike progressive process in the alteration of the meaning of our word rooting in accident or in caprice, or in both. The original notion was, probably, that of separation, destruction (cf. e. g. *mordere*, *morsus*, to bite, i. e. to tear, to sunder, and the name *Mars* for the god of battles,

¹⁾ Gesenius in his *Hebräisches Wörterbuch*, edit. 4, s. v. מָרַד, confirms both these statements.

slaughter, pestilence, &c.). — Yet, the learned historian Dahlmann would seem to have taken a very different view of the term under consideration. In a casual note to the Icelandic portion of his most critical Danish History,¹⁾ he says: „mord, Scländisch ursprünglich Verbergung, Versteckung, occultatio, bann erst heimliche Tödtung.“ If this were the case, the expression under mention signified originally only *secret* killing, and Dahlmann believes this import to be still retained and discernible in the compound Mordbrand, i. e. secret arson. It may be hazardous to contradict so accurate a writer; nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that he has mistaken the real meaning of the word Mordbrand. All incendiarism, if unlawful and malicious, would naturally be secret; and, though the word Mordbrand may have gradually come to be employed in a vague manner for wanton and criminal setting fire to buildings — it is, doubtless, thus employed by German historical, non-juridical writers —, yet I firmly believe that this word originally meant and, properly, still means only setting fire to buildings inhabited by human beings so that the *death* of the indwellers was the intended, or might be the probable or possible, consequence of the act. At least, however self-evidently the notion of illegality and criminality might, by an easy and a natural induction, become more or less speedily engrafted upon that of secrecy, the laws of every civilized country draw an essential distinction between the setting of fire to uninhabited edifices and to edifices inhabited by human beings. But, Dahlmann refers us to Jacob Grimm as his authority. What, however, Grimm²⁾ affirms and demonstrates is this: that the ancient Germanic tribes carefully distinguished between open homicide (slahta) and secret homicide (mordar), and he adds: „die alten gesetze legen aber den begriff der heimlichkeit nicht sowohl in den anfall, als in das verbergen des leichnams.“ He, therefore, considers the present acceptation of the term mord rather an extension than a restriction of its original import, and that the word Meuchelmord was subsequently introduced to express what mord by itself had previously conveyed; and we know that the root of Meuchel embodies secretness (about this last fact there can be no doubt, though the etymology is somewhat difficult to pursue: then Meuchelmord would be a pleonasm, like e. g. Diebstahl, cf. the English words thief and to steal).

¹⁾ Geschichte von Dänemark, B. I, p. 160. ²⁾ Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer, 1828, pp. 625—628.

This minute discussion will not appear in itself unnecessary, or here out of place, if we bear in mind what will evolve itself for argumentative purposes in §. 48, where we shall discuss what has been falsely ¹⁾ advanced by e. g. Grotius and Michaelis on the exact power and import of the Hebrew verb *נָסַף* in the Decalogue.

§. 6. The relation of Murder to Suicide.

Since Michaelis' standard book on the Laws of Moses, a most laborious and detailed work to which we shall refer more than once again in the sequel, has been translated into English, I may suppose every biblical English student to be aware that in it the author proposes to himself to consider the Mosaic legislation not as a Theologian, but as a Civilian, and that he on all occasions lays stress upon the circumstance that Moses here steps before us as the giver of civil laws only. According to him, now, Moses, as civil lawgiver, does not inflict any punishment upon, does not interdict, does not even make mention of, suicide; and one of the reasons (the others will come before us in the sequel) he assigns for the Hebrew legislator's silence on our topic is about as follows.²⁾ „An express prohibition of suicide in the name of Jehovah would not avail those at all who do not believe in Religion, whereas, in regard to such conscientious persons as firmly believe that a person dying suicidally will be everlastingly damned, a still worse consequence might be easily apprehended for the State, viz. that they would murder somebody else for the purpose of losing their lives in their turn, but of previously gaining time for so-called repentance and conversion.“

We may reasonably be silent about the unbelievers in religion; for, most assuredly, the identical assertion would hold good in exactly the same degree of every other prohibition or commandment in the decalogue, or in any other portion of the Mosaic legislation; but the clause about those who firmly believe seems to call for close examination. Its validity and cogency our Göttingen Professor endeavors to demonstrate from (in his time) recent occurrences in the neighbouring State of Denmark, and the substance of his communications, which he amplifies in another work of his,³⁾ is as follows.

¹⁾ Vide Deut. IV, 42; Josh. XX, 5, 6; XXI, 13. ²⁾ *Reisliches Recht*, Theil VI, pp. 9, 10 of the edit. of 1775. In the English translation, vol. IV, p. 209 ff. ³⁾ *Moral*, herausgegeben von Stäudlin, B. II, §. 56, p. 44.

Certain wanton and malicious persons who, tired of life and anxious for death, had murdered somebody else in order that they might, gaining time for escaping Hell by penance, lose their lives by the hand of public justice, the Danish Monarch Christian VI caused to be executed with the most refined and prolonged cruelty, by having them broken on the wheel, &c. But the Danish people, disgusted with the spectacle of such truly barbarous executions, compassionately and successfully petitioned the king for the discontinuance of them. However, the crime alluded to was then repeatedly committed, the usual milder and quicker mode of capital punishment not proving efficacious in checking it. At length, Christian VII (anno 1768) hit upon the politic expedient of not putting such criminals to death at all, but of rather forcing the continuance of life upon them, at the same time, however, rendering that life by constant hard labor and annual corporal chastisement as pangful and disgraceful as possible to them. This procedure our author lauds as the only infallible remedy in the case under mention, and (on p. 51 of his *Moral*) hazards the following conjecture about the cause of the said suicidal mania in Copenhagen. „The multitude of German deserters who enter the Danish service, are seized there, in consequence of the moister air, with real home-sickness, yet cannot desert no account of the intervening sea.“ (He is, however, not sure, whether all the suicides there were really Germans.) A note in that work of Stäudlin's which I have mentioned in the Preface informs me that the only three Danish monographs on suicide known to him appeared in the last quarter of the past century.¹⁾ But, not understanding Danish, I have remained in ignorance of their contents which would, I presume, have shed some further light upon the strange phenomenon related by Michaelis. But, this phenomenon does not by any means stand isolated in Denmark. Parallel cases occurred in Prussia during the reign of Frederick the Great, in one of the most distinguished and favored regiments of whose army, the guards, there occurred from the year 1740—1800 one hundred and thirty cases of suicide, and twenty nine executions for different crimes, especially child-murder. Campbell,²⁾ quoting Preusz as his authority, recounts what follows. „They had a notion that, if they put an end to their

¹⁾ Viz. by Bastholm, 1787; by Münter and Birch, 1789; and by Gamborg, 1796. ²⁾ Court and Times of Frederick the Great, vol. II, p. 267.

own lives, they should incur everlasting punishment, whereas the spirit of the innocent child whose life they took would be sure to go to heaven, and they should have time to repent, and make their peace with God, before they suffered for the crime." I should have inclined to suppose that people had grown wiser on this point ere now; but a tragical occurrence which happened in one of the theatres at Lyons about a couple of years ago, convinces me that some such sort of perversion or confusion of religious ideas has not yet entirely died away out of Christendom. Borrowing our account from a provincial English newspaper, ¹⁾ we learn substantially what follows. A young man, Jobard by name from Dijon, who had formerly been an élève of the Frères Chrétiens, was, though weary of life, afraid of committing suicide, because he would then not have had time to „mettre sa conscience en règle“. Therefore, in order that he might, as it were, kill two birds with one stone, i. e. bring himself to the scaffold, and gain the needful leisure for repenting and obtaining God's grace, he deliberately stabbed a certain Mme. Richard whom he did not even so much as know personally. Afterwards, somebody suggested to him that he might have provoked some assassin to kill him; his reply, however, was to the effect that the said somebody had no religion. Another person suggested to him that a slow poison might have answered his purpose; but to that person he rejoined that in such a case one often dies when one least expects it, and that he might then have been „caught“ (pincé).

Of course, it would be the quickest and easiest method to set down all suchlike occurrences as simple instances of lunacy, and say no more about them. Methinks, however, they will more fitly be turned to account, if we call upon them to furnish legitimate material for four sets of remarks or disquisitions which may prove of essential importance to us in connexion with our immediate theme.

I. We here encounter what cannot but appear to us an almost palpable misconception of the real nature of suicide.

Suicide is, we may say, simply and solely a willing, seeking, compassing of death without any clear, certain, immediate object beside and beyond death. Therefore, all accurate and consistent christian writers, legal, e. g. Blackstone;²⁾ as well as ethical, e. g.

¹⁾ Liverpool Standard, Sept. 30, 1851. ²⁾ Vide his Commentaries on the laws of England, vol. IV, pp. 188, 189.

Daub,¹⁾ are wisely agreed in teaching that to commit any *crime* whatsoever which is civilly punished with death is — suicide. It is true, *indirect* suicide — thus under certain circumstances they call it, and they are, doubtless, justified in doing so for the behoof of systematic arrangement; — but despite the said qualification, *such* „indirect“ suicide must be pronounced to stand in point of its genuine guilt and deepest nature upon an unmistakeable level with what they and we denominate direct suicide. Nay, even the heathen dramatist Aeschylus²⁾ would appear to have understood rightly this bearing of the matter at issue, if we only make allowance for the simple difference that in Greek antiquity blood-revenge,³⁾ the neglect of which was considered a heavy crime, constituted, as far as murder was concerned, that which we Christians in modern times have decreed to assume the character of the published and recognized law of capital punishment. Klytaimnestra to Orestes: „then, thou wilt kill me, thy mother, O son?“ He to her: *οὐ τοι σφαιρὴν, οὐκ ἐγὼ, κατακτενῆς*. Consequently, if to suffer death by the hand of public justice for one's crimes be *in effect* identical with killing one's self, to commit any crime for the express and avowed purpose of being condemned to death by the magistracy, is a fortiori *in motive* manifestly so. Ergo, the above narrated facts must appear to us only so many striking and startling exemplifications of Gualtier's well-known line: „incidis in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim.“ — And, as regards the Jews, whose case we more especially started from, Moses had expressly interdicted the murder of *another*, and, therefore, an express interdiction of the murder of *self* could scarcely be supposed to interfere with that prohibition, nor would obedience to an anti-suicidal injunction have been likely to provoke or produce a violation of the murder-forbidding commandment, unless, perchance, the Jews should have imagined themselves warranted in arriving at an ethical result which alas! sundry ancient and modern christian teachers of morality and legislation have,

¹⁾ Vide his *Judas Ischariot*, oder das Böse im Verhältnis zum Guten, B. I, p. 6°. His somewhat involved interrogatory verdict runs thus: „Denn ist nicht jeder durch das Gesetz über die Menschen verhängte und gegen sie, ihrer Verbrechen wegen, ausgesprochene Tod ein Mord, den sie, das Gesetz übertretend, indirect an sich selber begehen, und mit welchem nur nicht selbst wiederum, und nicht immer, wie mit dem Selbstmorde fast immer, ein Verbrechen begangen, wohl aber eine Strafe vollzogen wird.“ ²⁾ Choephorae, I, 920. ³⁾ Goellism, as it were, of which Hebrew institute we shall have to speak in §. 47; Vide Michaelis ubi supra, §§. 134–137.

as we shall learn by and by, confidently put forward, viz. that suicide is a *greater* crime than murder.

II. We encounter here what can scarcely fail to present itself to us as a dreamy notion of the possibility, and as an exaggerated estimate of the efficacy, of repentance.

God forbid that I for one should place myself even during a single moment of my existence among those who would fain by bigoted zeal, unwise sophistry, or inhuman apathy undermine yon „ponte dei sospiri“ across which the repentant sinner's soul may wend its sorrow-furrowed path to the Mercy-seat, or undervalue yon „Peri's tear“ that may open the portals of Paradise to remorse-stricken erring and fallen man; nor would I doubt that, as the unpolluted soul of the saint from the couch of prayerfully endured fatal disease, so the blood-stained soul of the murderer may ascend from the gallows-tree, into the bosom of its Heavenly Father, sooner or later. But — let us take heed to the conditions, conditions necessarily and sternly implied even in the tender and touching utterances about „the smoking flax that shall not be quenched, and the bruised reed that shall not be broken in pieces“, and about „the joy that shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety nine just persons, which need no repentance“; let us take heed thereto, and not deceive others, or ourselves. Are they who propose to themselves repentance aware of the difficulty of the task, and of its fearfulness? Methinks, from what I have observed, and known others approximatively to feel, that to repent veritably of a heavy misdeed, of such a misdeed as e. g. murder, involves an anguish so unutterably keen, a woe so overwhelmingly terrific that one single night, nay, one single hour, of its duration is despair as dark and damnation as deep as all the most glaringly depicted everlasting hell-punishments can possibly be; and I too do believe in my innermost heart that such a night, aye, such an hour, would be a sufficient expiatory sacrifice to sternest *divine* justice, and wash „sins, though they be red like crimson, that they be as wool.“ Doubtless, there sometimes has been, and still sometimes may be again, such a turning point in the life of the soul of even the murderer; for the N. T. record concerning yon malefactor on the Cross is manifestly intended to reveal to us such a possibility; but it has been remarked (by Hannah More, if I remember rightly) with as much delicacy as devoutness „there is 'this one instance given that none might despair,

and only one that none might *presume*." And, what frivolous, monstrous, devilish presumption does there not lie in *speculating*, as it were, beforehand on the certainty and validity of repentance? Alas, however, such poor, half-witted, ignorant, superstitious malefactors are but too fearfully misled by the current catechism-notions of the nature and efficacy of repentance, and by the stupifying and deadening influences of sundry well-meaning chaplains of jails and pious prison-visiting ladies. Aye, if forgiveness-compelling repentance could be had at a moment's beck and call; or, if it could be preached or prayed into one like a creed-formula or a nervous tear; or, if it could be rubbed on one like extreme unction; or, if it were a mystical and magical thing that could be given by man into man as a vademecum on his last thitherward journey: then one might sin on the strength of, and with a view to, its coming in the hour of need. But, let us hold fast by the genuine meaning of the N. T. word *μετανοια*, i. e. change of mind; and boldly disavow the *antinomistic* import and tendency of the so-called *evangelical* doctrine of the Atonement, turn and twist it as you will.

If, however, any reader should say that I am *not a Christian*, because I think, feel, write thus, he is at liberty to do so; but he would find it above his capacity, I humbly ween, to convince me of the *anti-Christism* of the above sentiments. I also beg him to remain assured that I neither claim nor desire to be a Christian in *his* sense or fashion. —

It is, no doubt, just and right, because merciful and judicious, on the part of Christian legislation to allow to a murderer an interval between his condemnation and execution as preparation for death, and to provide him with such religious instruction as he may require, though he should not even covet it. But between God and his own conscience alone be the issue of the work done in the condemned cell and on the final walk. The public, as I think, have no concern therewith, and no right to a knowledge thereof; for it is a hideously depraved curiosity to which the Newspapers diligently pander, when they bring to us the minutest particulars of the state of mind of our doomed fellow-being, he himself becoming not unfrequently seduced into the most horrid and absurd simulations and dissimulations by his cognizance of the fact that all he says and does is as minutely chronicled and eagerly perused as the account of a theatrical exhibition or of a Royal Progress. And then into the bargain occasio-

nally his farewell harangue to the gaping multitude of women, children, and men from the platform, a rope already round his neck and a cap already over his ears! I should think, the deeper his own silence in his last moments, and the deeper the silence of others about him, when he is gone „to his own place“, the better. But how differently we manage all this now-a-days. Were I not anxious to hasten away from this painful subject, I could quote from memory anecdotes — pardon this light word! — about the foulest murderers who with a sort of spiritual intoxication informed their auditory in their „dying speech“ that they rejoiced at having committed the crime for which they were about to suffer, since it had become the means of bringing them to a „knowledge of saving grace“, and that they died perfectly happy, since they felt sure of entering immediately upon the full enjoyment of everlasting unutterable bliss through faith in the merits of their glorious Redeemer; and about priests and parsons who in their „commemoration-sermons“ not only expressed themselves with the most sickly sentimentality about the success of their own spiritual endeavors, but even hinted at a kind of pious envy they themselves felt of the wonderously blessed exit of the departed victim of penal justice! — Verily, it is a most strangely and sadly thoughtless and senseless thing, much of that which we are wont to call our orthodoxy in the matter of death-bed repentance, of being „snatched like a brand out of the fire“, of being „called at the eleventh hour“. When a man's minutes of life may be computed, when his every path to sensual enjoyment is closed up, when every gate-way to earthly hope is barred to him, think you that it is so great an effort of virtue and religion, if he eagerly grasp at whatsoever small board is thrown out to him that he may have a chance of keeping his ship-wrecked soul from sinking in the Ocean of Eternity? To me it seems certainly not unnatural that he should do so; but who can seriously and solemnly affirm that such an effort is much more or much better than united cowardice and selfishness and in no wise either virtue or religion? And is it possible, unless the economy of the yonderworld be at utter variance with everything reason and feeling compel us in our present state of existence to view as the nature and destination of the human soul, that light and love and purity and bliss can be apportioned to it, except by conscious effort, habitual training, gradual development, by Nobleness and Courage, which are the very opposites of calculating egoism and

slavish fear? Yea, there is a consistency and a defiance even in sin and the sinner that are loftier and holier than reckoning upon, and bargaining with, Divine Mercy are; there is a Maria Manningism of „dying game“ and „making no sign“ which has a better right to, and chance of, ultimate salvation, — *ultimate*, I say emphatically, when many sorrows of many aeons shall have illumined the dark heart and broken the stubborn will, still a will, and, therefore, something sthenic, drastic, vital, potent, than a George Frederick Manningism of dying self-deceived and others-deceiving, wavering and wantoning between Flesh and Spirit, has, — an asthenic, impotent mis-nature, too mean a thing almost for Mercy itself to be merciful unto. — It is not without pain that I have written this last passage; for it seems harshly felt and harshly worded. Yet I cannot and will not expunge it. On the one hand, to put the matter to a practical test, unloose the bonds, open the prison-gates, lead back the convicted and condemned criminal into liberty, into life's opportunities and temptations, chances and warfarings! Think you that, in one instance out of twenty, his much-extolled so-called penitence and faith in the gospel-scheme of redemption would have made him *sin-proof*, and a „new-creature“, who would „work out his own salvation with fear and trembling“, who would „think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report“, who would strive „to be perfect, even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect?“ I rather believe from all I have seen and read and compared that many a John Tawell might then rise up again in society whose much-admired piety and regeneration, domestic prayers, punctual attendance at public worship, charitable contributions to Bible and Missionary Societies &c., the veriest superficial varnish upon the most thorough inward rottenness, would prove to us that they who once merited, but escaped, the gallows, are very likely to merit it sooner or later again, and God forbid that they should again be set free even into transportation, ticket of leave, and ultimate return into the bosom of a credulous community. And, on the other hand, what a most strangely sentimental and hollow notion is not that of ours about a gallows-tree becoming, by force of faith and repentance, forthwith a Jacob's ladder on which the sin-polluted soul may in a moment ascend into the mansions of bliss and the habitations of the sainted! Far better, wiser, holier, methinks, than such a doctrine, not only as preached by canting and ranting Methodists,

but also by more learned and refined Episcopallians and Presbyterians, is the Catholic tenet of Purgatory in its *radical idea*, according to which a gradual catharsis of the soul, in which still the Flesh and the Spirit are in ferment, the divine and the demonic forces are at warfare, must be effected by suffering, struggle, encreasing experience and growing insight. As before said, repentance deep and true may be sufficient to ward off damnation; but thence follows not that it is capable of ensuring immediate and full salvation. It Man be, as we believe him to be, a free agent, and not a mere machine and puppet; if Religion be, as we believe it to be, the healthy culture of the highest affections, and not a mere hysterical fit or magical trick; if Heaven be, as we believe it to be, the communion of spirits purified by self-mortification and perfected by self-conquest, and not a mere locality for catechism-rehearsal and psalm-singing: then entrance thereinto, i. e. Salvation, is necessarily conditioned by that stage of progress in saintliness and God-likeness at which each individual has arrived, by inward fitness for intercourse with the Holy and proximity to the Holiest. Is not, indeed, all society on earth, every community in the world organized and regulated by principles of graduated and classified characteristics and qualifications of its members? What can the foolish do among the wise, the ignorant among the erudite, the coarse among the refined, the young among the old, the weak among the strong? And, unless the Yonder annihilate the Here, unless death destroy all the conditions of life, unless dissolution be utter and unnatural metamorphosis, instead of simple dismissal and translation, of the human spirit: we cannot but take for granted that our common popular creed, so eagerly adopted by the sinful, and so easily credited by the unthinking, about the immediate entrance upon full salvation by all so-called orthodox believers is a fallacy and a delusion, at variance with right sense, with divine justice, and, if we would but look into the Spirit, and not cavil about Words, with the manifest deeper meaning of Jesus and the Apostles. Were it otherwise, I for one should shrink from even desiring ever to quit the earth where the one most glorious privilege, at least, is accorded unto man, that, namely, of communing by rational choice with congenial, i. e. inwardly kindred, minds and hearts.

III. The above recounted incidents seem to exhibit to us a belief in the hopeless damnableness of suicide, as of an act which cannot be pardoned, because it cannot be repented of.

Or course, I am not so minutely acquainted with the state and character of religious instruction and pulpit-eloquence in Denmark and Prussia, during the second half of the 18th century that I could give any detailed evidence on the origin of the monomaniac idea which manifested itself in the said occurrences; nor do I possess even the slightest knowledge of the dogmatic and ethical system of the so-called *Frères Chrétiens* (?) among whom M. Jobard is affirmed to have received his education. But, speaking quite in general, that which operated more or less effectively and directly in producing the belief upon which those monomaniacs not altogether unaccountably acted is, doubtless, what follows. Sundry christian Divines and Moralists of the 17th and 18th centuries, desirous of checking the rapidly growing propensity to, and the ever encreasing practice of, suicide, and finding no perfectly clear commandment against suicide in the writings of the New Testament, strained their sight to such an unnatural refinement that they forced themselves into discovering that just the most tremendous and awful denunciations of Jesus and John about „the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which cannot be forgiven either in this world or in that come“: and about, „the sin unto death for which even the prayers of the brethren are forbidden“ applied specifically to self-slaughter. How artificial, baseless and absurd such interpretations, nevertheless, are, we shall see, when we in Section V come to speak of the New Testament itself. More than this. At a comparatively early period of the *Catholic Church* and up to the present day, and many *Protestants* have echoed the verdict (both Catholic and Protestant testimonies to this effect will more than once present themselves to us in the sequel of this *Treatise*), the entire weight and distinctive blackness of the sin of suicide have been declared to rest in the impossibility of its being repented of, and everlasting damnation has, therefore, been ascribed to it as a necessary consequence. unwisely and unkindly, we believe. It is true and self-evident that the actor very rarely has, or even desires to have, any leisure left for repentance in such interval as elapses between his deadly deed and its deathly issue. This is certainly the case, if the mode of self-slaughter he has selected be a quick one, and if perfect success attend its adoption. A state of lingering suffering few suicides can be supposed either to covet, or to reckon upon. Therefore, it is an exception to the rule, when, the fatal attempt not having proved instantaneously mortal or even consciousness-bereaving,

the suicide may, or really does, employ the remaining hours or days of life in contrite self-humiliation before God and in imploring, with or without priestly aid, His merciful forgiveness. However, a slow poison, as was suggested to Jobard, or self-starvation, as practised by some, would certainly secure to the suicide such an advantage, if so great an advantage it be. But, how very numerous are not the cases of such suicides as prior to their last deed for hours, or days, or weeks have — the written records they have left behind them assure us — earnestly and anxiously solicited pardon from Him, under the sheltering wings of whose Eternity they were about to seek a resting-place for their earth-scared spirits? Yet, supposing nought of this kind to have taken place — as far as our knowledge reaches —, have we any real right to be so perfectly sure that the suicidal soul took its flight hence altogether *unrepentantly*, and, therefore, according to the phraseology of Divines, *unpreparedly*? Methinks, wrestlings and tears unseen, strugglings and sighs unheard may have constituted a repentance most profound, *ante*, though not *post*, factum, and a good life until, and except, the last false step and grievous error may have wrought a preparation not exactly deceptive or fruitless. But the — according to the estimate of many of his countrymen — gigantic moralist, Dr. Johnson, more apprehensive and bigoted than most men in the matter of Death and Judgment, may here give his testimony on this subject. In a conversation with Boswell on suicide, he delivers himself as follows.¹⁾ „If a man has led a good life for seven years, and then is hurried by passion to do what is wrong, and is suddenly carried off, depend upon it he will have the reward of his seven years' good life: God will not take a catch of him. Upon this principle Richard Baxter believes that a suicide may be saved. If, says Baxter, it should be objected that what I maintain may encourage suicide, I answer, I am not to tell a lie to prevent it.“ Poor Bozzy's objections and chatterings which he himself faithfully records, are somewhat puerile, and need not here be repeated (to Baxter himself we shall, perhaps, recur on a later occasion). In our third Introductory Chapter, when we come to speak of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Young, Blair, we shall have to discuss this matter in its literary and historical bearings; but a few psychological and theological brief and simple remarks on

¹⁾ *Life*, vol. VIII, p. 219.

the question of the everlasting damnation of all such as die the death of wilful self-slaughter cannot be here out of place, and might be expected here. For instance, then, a catholic priest recently published a sermon on Luke XIX, 41, 42, in which he, first of all, having endeavoured, and, of course, successfully according to his own estimate, to demonstrate the fact of the existence of such a thing in and by itself, forthwith proceeds to apply the matter to deliberate suicide: everlasting damnation, then, will, according to our zealous orator, infallibly visit the responsible slayer of himself.¹⁾ „Der Selbstmörder geht ewig verloren. Doch, Gellebte! mißverstehet mich nicht! Nicht jeder Selbstmörder wird verdammt. Die Unzurechnungsfähigen können die ewige Seligkeit erlangen. (How charitable!!) Aber die weit größere Zahl der Selbstmörder ist selbst schuld an ihrem Verbrechen; sie sind blind und verstockt, wie Jerusalem, und stürzen sich in's ewige Verderben. Die Thoren wollen einem zeitlichen Unglücke entgehen und stürzen sich dafür in ewiges; sie wollen einer zeitlichen Strafe entfliehen und erhalten dafür eine ewige. Und das ist denn die fürchterlichste, schrecklichste Folge, die der Selbstmord für den Selbstmörder hat, die ewige Verdammung.“ Suchlike sermonizations with their cheap magniloquence, whether proceeding from Romanist or Protestant, may serve to excite or amuse the nerves of old ladies over their tea, and spice even the insipidities of dandyism in a ball-room: she asks a justified Curate about the exact meaning of the Hebrew and the Greek word which is rendered in our authorized version by „eternal“; he solicits the more experienced Incumbent's aid towards accurately computing the measure of the various similes which occur in the N. T. in reference to the lot of the wicked in the world to come; and both play at battle-door and shuttle-cock with the most solemn and fearful terms, as if the discussion concerned the latest pattern of a shawl, or the most recently imported fashionable dance. As regards myself, I most conscientiously and most unhesitatingly side with those who, like the churchfather Origines, do not, will not, nay, cannot believe in Everlasting Damnation as a *necessary* and an *inevitable* consequence of any *individual* *misdeed* whatsoever, and feel fully convinced that the very formidable antagonist to early orthodoxy and even christianity itself, Porphyrius, was right, when he urged as a cogent argument against everlasting damnation the following words

1) Vier Predigten über den Selbstmord, von Nicolaus Sorge, 1852, p. 85.

of Jesus himself: „with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again“ (Matth. VII, 2), and at once proceed to apply it to the case of a deliberate suicide *as such only*. He is, we are taught to believe and we sincerely do believe, to be judged by Him, whom the founder of our Religion bids us conceive and address specifically as „our Father.“ Now, O gentle reader, I ask you this question: knowest thou in the entire circle of thy acquaintances any one Parent who would, if he could, deliver his child over to eternal damnation simply and solely, because such child had deliberately and inconsiderately slain himself? This is an argumentum ad hominem, and we will cite a most striking and convincing individual example. Upon young Hohenhausen (vide the work quoted in §. 3) a book of no fewer than 430 pages has been somewhat injudiciously and needlessly written, each of his highly cultivated and sincerely religious parents contributing a separate treatise therein to the memory of their only and cherished son. Though Albers, Fischer and sundry other eminent physicians pronounced him to have been insane and irresponsible, his Parents, who had known him longer and better, were far from laying any such „flattering unction to their souls.“ Both of them see good reason for believing him to have been in a very great measure, at least, morally accountable for his last action, and, indeed, very justly so; for I can scarcely picture to myself a more premeditated, causeless, heartless case of suicide than his was. He had carried within himself the resolve for years, he had several times unsuccessfully attempted the deed, he had speculated and written about his determinations with the iciness, scurrility and, we might almost say, blasphemy of a young fiend. Indeed, it requires more than ordinary patience and nerve to peruse his biography. Nevertheless, and this is the only point which here concerns us —, both Father and Mother emphatically express in sweetest, most fervent language their lively and firm hope of meeting him again in the blessedness of Heaven, of being re-united with their child who had erred so far from duty's path and had inflicted upon them that deep wound which must bleed on, until he shall have become theirs again, his eyes opened to his misdeed, his heart beating lovingly again in all its pristine purity and glow. Enough. We only ask: is man's Great Heavenly Parent so much less forgiving than they? Nay, I will not scruple in this context to quote from the sublimest minstrel of ancient Judea (Is. XLIX, 15) Jehovah's incomparably pathetic

anthropomorphistic appeal to the people of Israel: „can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.“

IV. The above recounted incidents remind us more or less significantly of a strange dictum which has issued from the lips and pens of sundry teachers of mark and influence in every age of the christian church, viz. that suicide is a *greater* crime than murder.

Lactantius,¹⁾ having spoken of the suicide of Demokritos in particular and of suicide in general, continues thus. „Quo nihil sceleratius fieri potest. Nam si homicida nefarius est, qui (quia?) hominis extinctor est: eidem scelerei obstrictus est, qui se necat, quia hominem necat. Imo vero *maius* esse id facinus existimandum est, cujus ultio Deo soli subiacet.“ Augustinus,²⁾ arguing that to kill one's self is worse even than to kill one's own parent, because a man stands nearer to himself than a parent can stand to him, expresses himself as follows. „For, if a parricide be on that account more wicked than any other homicide, because he kills not merely a human being, but a near relative; and among parricides too, the nearer the person killed, the greater criminal he is judged to be: without doubt, *worse* still is he who kills himself, because there is none nearer to a man than himself.“ Chrysostomus,³⁾ when giving vent to his controversial zeal against the Manichaeans, draws the inference that, if life were something bad, as they considered it to be, then suicide must be meritorious; whereupon he thus proceeds: *ὦν δὲ καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς τοιοῦτους κολάζει τῶν ἀνδροφόνων μᾶλλον, καὶ πάντας βδελυρόμεθα, καὶ εἰκότως εἰ γὰρ ἑτέρους ἀναίσιν. οὐ καλὸν, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἑαυτόν.* Thus some of the most renowned, erudite and acute of the church-fathers; but these sentiments or opinions are far from being confined to the early ages of christian ethical teaching. Two or three examples of comparatively modern Moralists and Lawyers may suffice. The Episcopalian Judge Coke⁴⁾ assures us: „it is a *greater* crime to kill one's self than to kill another man.“ Bunyan (in a passage of the Pilgrim's Progress which we shall revert to in §§. 48, 49) affirms suicide to be more reprehensible than the murder of another, because, whereas the murderer victimizes another's body only, by suicide the-agent's body and soul are at

¹⁾ Instit. Div. lib. III, c. 18. ²⁾ De Patientia, c. 10. ³⁾ Opera, edid. Montfaucon, T. X, p. 664, in epist. ad Gal. I, 4. ⁴⁾ Institutes of the Laws of England, 1644, Part III, c. 8.

one and the same time destroyed or lost. And the Catholic Philosopher Le Vayer does not hesitate to deduce the correctness of some such result as Augustinus' from reason itself.¹⁾ „La raison nous apprend d'ailleurs, qu'on ne se peut défaire soi même, sans exercer l'infame métier de Bourreau, et sans commettre un crime *pire que le parricide*, puisqu'il n'y a ni père ni frère, qui nous soit si proche que nous mêmes.“ And, finally, I remember reading in some Italian volume²⁾ — the author's name has escaped my memory — the following emphatic declaration in most decided language: „Iddio vieta assolutamente si l'omicidio altrui che il proprio; ma l'omicidio di se stesso passa presso di lui per delitto *ancora piu enorme*.“

Having collected and collocated these dicta, I really scarcely know how to assign my reasons for not agreeing with them, though I feel utterly unable to agree with them. Perhaps, it will be best to commence by making two *admissions* apparently in their favor.

1. There are, doubtless, certain bearings by force of which suicide and murder *converge* towards the same point and may, therefore, be argued against upon the very same grounds, and condemned for the very same reasons. For instance, both of them remove prematurely a link out of the chain of the body politic, and are, therefore, a breach of social duty; both of them do or may deprive untimely the surviving relatives or friends of a source of support or happiness, and are, therefore, an unfeeling misdeed; both of them are the identical act of violence committed against that earthly vessel in which a „God-imaging“ personality was temporarily tabernacled; both of them send a human soul unto judgment, ere its possible „ripeness for the skies“ has been attained to, ere its destined course has been completely run.

2. It is perfectly true that suicide and murder frequently *concur*. For instance. *Madness*, produced by hereditary organization, or by religious hallucinations, or by brutish excesses, often bears simultaneously the double-fruit of murder and suicide. It may be that then a person accidentally nearest, when the paroxysm comes on, is the victim, or that a person really the dearest is studiously selected for the victim of those who forthwith proceed to cause their own blood to flow unto that they have just shed. *Love* sometimes —

¹⁾ Oeuvres de François de la Mothe Le Vayer, T. V, partie I, p. 220.

²⁾ Opere scelte del signor Voltaire nell' Italiana trasportate, 1760, Tom. I, p. 26, note.

so subtle is its origin and so unaccountable are its manifestations — nay, often even, when most keenly felt and imagined deepest, assumes all the characteristics of mischief and hatred, and, more especially after having brooded out of its own over-wrought intensity the demon jealousy, tempts the lover to plunge the loved one into an untimely grave, and immediately, ere it has closed, to lay himself prematurely therein also. Or, again, as regards this same passion of passions, oftentimes when those who, prevented by parental will or outward circumstances from wedded union, resolve to become united at the altar of self-chosen death, the one of them suggests the voluntary death-union, or persuades to it, having reason to be sure that the suggestion will be accepted, the persuasion effectual, and is, therefore, to all intents and purposes as much a murderer as he who fires a bullet or thrusts a dagger, though both of them should leap into a river or down a precipice together in knotted embrace. Or, finally, *Parental Affection*: we ever and anon read that a Mother or a Father, willing, but unable, to earn bread for her or his youthful offspring, and weary and sick of hearing the infant-voice's unavailing cry for food, and loathing and fearing to bequeath it to the „tender mercies“ of an unfeeling and a wanton world, in some despondent moment snatches it up out of the fangs of misery and want, and hies away to some neighbouring canal or pond, where she or he seeks with it a grave „in waters less deep“ than is their heart-piercing woe.

So far the admissions we intended to make. We will now venture upon some few *comments*, and begin with the last admission.

There really are passages in Pagan and Christian writers which seem to aver so close an affinity between suicide and murder that every suicide could easily become a murderer, and even would become one, if circumstances were to tempt him, inasmuch as they who do not esteem and value their own lives, on that account neither esteem nor value the lives of others. Examples. The elder Seneca, when arguing both for and against the punishment of suicide, says: ¹⁾ „nihil non ausurus fuit, qui se potuit occidere.“ The younger Seneca expresses himself as follows. ²⁾ „Ita dico; quisquis vitam suam contempserit, tuæ dominus est. Contempsit et omnes ille qui mortem prîns.“ (And I may in passing remark that the elder Corneille

¹⁾ M. Annaei Senecae Rhetoris quae extant opera, 1607, p. 263. ²⁾ Ep. 4.

places the identical sentiment on the lips of his Aemilie: ¹⁾ „Quelque soin qu'il se donne et quelqu' ordre qu'il tienne, Qui méprise la vie est maître de la sienne“, i. e. of that of Augustus.) The Roman civilian Marcianus. ²⁾ „Et merito, si sine causa sibi manus intulit (or intulisset, according to another reading), puniendus est: qui enim sibi non pepercit, multo minus alii parcat.“ The Roman civilian Ulpianus. ³⁾ „Tanquam non nihil in alium ausurus, qui hoc adversus se ausus est.“ And, last of all, the churchfather Augustinus ⁴⁾ finds corroborative evidence of the necessary nexus between suicide and murder in the first hemistich of the following passage in the apocryphal book of Jesus Sirach (XIV, 5): „Qui sibi nequam est, cui alii bonus erit.“

But, what do all these passages amount to (of course, they cannot prove anything), if closely looked into? We will examine them consecutively.

a. The elder Seneca's testimony. On this occasion, he is writing merely in the character of a *rhetorician*. When we come to speak of (vide §. 35) Greek and Roman legislation regarding suicide, and to quote also the dicta of e. g. Quintilian and Libanius, both of them rhetoricians also, we shall discover how carefully one must distinguish between the sober statements of facts and the mere supposition of imaginary proceedings in reference to *law*. Why, then, should we not employ the same caution here as far as suicide is *ethically* concerned? Therefore, knowing what silly babblements and scandalous lies made their way into suchlike school-exercises, I cannot feel myself in any wise called upon to believe that our author himself believed that a man who was allowed to slay himself with impunity would be capable of attempting anything and everything bad. In a word, no reliance at all need, or can, I presume, be placed on the sincerity of the foregoing assertion in a seriously argumentative point of view.

b. The younger Seneca's testimony. If we could compel ourselves to understand his above apophthegm in its literal import and in its utmost extent, this very sentiment would, doubtless, constitute the strongest possible argument for discrediting and condemning upon *social* grounds the principle and practice of suicide. Nevertheless,

¹⁾ Cinna I, scene 2. ²⁾ Pandect. lib. 48, tit. 21, lex 3, §. 6. ³⁾ Ibid. lib. 21, tit. 1, lex 23, §. 3. ⁴⁾ Epist. 204, 5., T. II, p. 765 of the Benedictine edit., Paris, 1689.

he was very far from intending it to be anything of the kind, inasmuch as the very epistle in which it occurs and the whole tenor of his philosophy (vide §. 29) are the very opposite of anti-suicidal on any ground whatsoever. I, therefore, conclude that we may quite safely place it to the account of the numerous paradoxical antitheses incidental to his mode of composition, of the occasional random asseverations of Stoicism which, though based on a truth of some sort, become defective, if developed into their proper proportions, and become even unjust and untrue, if applied generically and sweepingly.

c. The testimonies in the Justinian Code. These two dicta are more difficult to deal with, at least for me, and I, therefore, shall embrace the opportunity of placing myself under the welcome guidance, as far as the legal points are concerned, of one of the most celebrated living jurisconsults, von Wächter.¹⁾ Preliminarily, as I learn from him, very many passages of the corpus juris civilis are expressed less accurately and less circumstantially than they ought to have been, and must, therefore, be interpreted by the aid of, and in consonance with, the entire spirit and import of the *collective* utterance of the Justinian Code. Now, as we shall have an opportunity of showing in §. 35, the tenor and the purport of the laws in the said Code are unmistakeably and absolutely favorable to, and protective of, self-slaughter, speaking quite in general; and, consequently, the above passages can a priori scarcely be supposed to bear such a pregnant meaning as at first sight seems to attach to them, unless the Code under mention must be declared to stand in downright contradiction with itself. After which restrictive and cautioning general observation, we proceed to state briefly what follows. Ulpian is speaking of *slaves* only, and the context is thus: after having called any slave who attempts self-destruction „*malus servus*“, inasmuch as, very naturally, his master cannot reckon upon him as a safe possession, he proceeds as above. His dictum does not admit of any limiting interpretation, but must, on the contrary, be accepted literally and comprehensively; we must, however, not forget that, as before said, it relates to slaves only, and, bearing this specific reference in mind, must explain it and account for it through the medium of that peculiar light in which the Romans were wont

¹⁾ Neues Archiv des Criminalrechts, B. X, anno 1829, pp. 248, 249, 256—259, and cf. also pp. 98, 99, 258.

to view the *morality* of slaves, so that the logic in which it rooted, and out of which it grew, would indite some such reasoning process as the following one: the „mechanism of fear“ alone it is which prevents a slave from doing anything bad, from doing the very worst in his power; consequently, if such a one despise his own life so entirely as to attempt, or to commit, suicide, the said „mechanism of fear“ would, of course, cease to operate in any salutary manner or efficacious measure as regards him, and, *therefore*, such a slave could not but be regarded as dangerous even to the life of another person, or of other persons. Leaving this reasoning to itself for the present — we shall recur to it in the sequel —, we pass on to the above passage from Marcian, and merely annotate that, though, or, rather, because it, doubtless, refers to the suicide of *free* people, and not of slaves, its *only possible* meaning (cf. §. 35) is about thus: whoever commits suicide without any other cause, i. e. except that of the consciousness of having committed the crime of which he stands accused or for which he has been arraigned, e. g. *murder*, was presumptively guilty of the said crime: — so that it really has no bearing at all upon what it apparently affirms.

d. St. Augustine's testimony. The controversial anti-Donatist purpose for which our churchfather introduces this quotation the reader may look at for himself, but, as far as one may speak of context in the loosely knit passages (vide, however, verses 1—12 of this chapter) of this in many respects very beautiful apocryphal work, which the Greeks, therefore, aptly called „treasure of virtue“ (*καρπὸς σοφίας*) and the Latins „book for the people“ (*Ecclesiasticus*), the author is here alluding simply to ill-gotten wealth, and the concomitant unwise spending or heartless hoarding of it, the meaning, therefore, being only: *whoever is hard against himself, to whom will he be kind?* Thence, if authors were allowed to revisit our globe and peruse the writings of their expositors, this Sage could not fail to smile at the strange use to which the great church-father has put the said very harmless and self-evident saying of his.

Having endeavored to deprive the said testimonies of their sting, we will return to our previous admission of the frequent *concurrence* of suicide and murder, and make some few analytical remarks on the very cases I adduced by way of illustration. *Madness*. Here, however, we have, properly speaking, neither murder nor suicide before us; for *Insanity* (vide §. 13) does away with all moral and

responsible agency. *Love.* As regards the first of the two cases I put, how fearful and unnatural soever such a deed of slaughter may be, and although human law cannot but deal with it as positive murder; yet, if we could but realize to ourselves clearly and fully the agenizing and frantic despair which is hurried on to rob every other person of what it fain would, but dare not hope to, possess, we should, I ween, shrink from placing such a misdeed upon an exact level with grovelling and malicious murder. And, as regards the second of the two cases I put, is there not a something in us that would instinctively shrink from allowing us to rank such a death-counsellor and death-causer of a fellow-being with a common murderer, or to suppose for one moment that whoso has acted thus, deplorable and culpable in the extreme though the action remain, might, therefore, be capable of a deliberate and cold-blooded murder from any other motive or for any other object, from any motive or for any object of calculating self-interest? *Parental Affection.* We may call such a parent unnatural, we must consider such a parent criminal; but, if the parent should chance to be rescued and forced to live, the child alone perishing, a christian nation's voice would be loudly raised, I ween, to protect such a parent from the punishment due to a murderer, though the laws of the country should have pronounced public execution due, as, for example, not very many years ago in the case of Mary Furley among ourselves.

In brief, such murders as are designedly and immediately accompanied by suicide would appear to me, on closer inspection, scarcely to be of that nature which at the bar of *Ethics* we generally pronounce murder proper or malignant, however different the view taken at the bar of *Jurisprudence* may and must be. The malicious or real murderer, in the ethical sense of this term, victimizes a fellow-being, in order that thereby some benefit may accrue to himself, either money, or power, or honor, or pleasure; and not only would he fain live on that he may enjoy the fruits of his black crime, but it is, we may say, the very love of the carnalities of his own carnal existence which weaponed his arm against his fellow-mortal. Such murderers — let us think of the very recent instances of Professor Webster, Count Bocarmé, James Bloomfield Rush — use the utmost ingenuity to evade detection, to escape with life, i. e. to save and prolong their lives; and, had they not, fortunately for mankind, been found out, they would, in all human probability, have lived

on, more or less self-contentedly, to a good or, speaking more correctly, a bad, old age, never so much as dreaming of suicide. At the most, the thought and deed of self-destruction would come into such as a *Diabolus ex machina*, when there is no longer any probable or possible means and chance of escaping discovery and the consequent certainty of trial, conviction, and an ignominious public death. Let us remember e. g. the late case of the Duc de Praslin. Whensoever, on the contrary, a murderer commits suicide forthwith or almost forthwith, without any immediate external necessity for his doing so, his very suicide seems to me a proof that his deed of murder was less a work of either deliberate malice or speculative selfishness than, if I may thus express myself, one of conviction, or, of impulse. He individually has nothing to gain by his deed of blood, and does not mean or wish to gain anything by it. Unto himself as unto another he does his worst; and with that other he voluntarily goes to be placed, defendant against plaintiff, before a Judge who is „like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap“, and to answer at once for his fearful deed.

On the other hand, speaking quite in general and upon deepest principle, I must sadly deceive myself about every essential psychological and moral element characterizing those suicides whom ancient and modern story places before us as, we may say, genuine types of philosophical, or sentimental, or despondent self-slaughter, if I dare not affirm, without any fear of contradiction that, whereas they deliberately proceeded to stain their hand with their own blood, they would have shrunk with horror and disgust, nay, with a most salutary reverence and awe, from imbrueing the self-same hand in the blood of a fellow-man. Doubtless, into the breast of the purer and nobler among the slayers of themselves even the thought of the deliberate murder of a fellow-mortal never did or could enter as a possible thing. And, if, perchance, into the weaker and less hallowed breasts of some suicides the thought of murdering another instead of themselves may merely as thought have obtruded itself, if the life of yon other chanced to be what tarnished their honor, or darkened their hope, or withheld the object of their love, or poisoned the source of their peace, the suggestion was only as a dark cloud gliding for a moment over the pale moon in the stormy night of the soul, and, though their over-sensitive organization might make them become erring self-slayers, it could never render them foul

murderers of a fellow-being. Therefore, it was gratuitous, unjust; low to speculate, as Johnson does (vide his already quoted life by Boswell, vol. III, p. 270) in his own peculiar one-sided and obstinate fashion, on what desperate things a suicide might have done previously to killing himself. It is enough for us to know what he did do; and it is more than enough, it is fiction, suspicion, slander, neither fact, nor demonstration, nor charity, if we create unto ourselves a sophistic theory, and endeavor to make the characters and actions of other men square with it. Are we not aware that many a person commits self-destruction rather than become guilty of the slightest fraud to obtain the means of subsistence, or, rather than stoop to even the show of meanness to conquer prosperity, or, rather than remain any longer a burden to those who have toiled and struggled to support and comfort him, or, rather than move any longer in the society of coarse-minded sensualists or time-serving hypocrites? How, then, should we dare to assume of such that it lay within the range of the possibilities of their temperament or their principles to signalize the last hours of their social existence by some hypothetical and apocryphal outrageous folly or monstrous crime?

It was wearisome work to wade through this matter of what we called concurrence; it will, perhaps, prove still more ungenial work to grapple with what we have termed convergence; for the question yet remains to be answered: is suicide a greater crime than murder?

Of course, I need not here and now enquire into all the *various* kinds of murder of a fellow-being, ponder their cause, weigh the respective measure of their guilt, pronounce a verdict upon them from the bench of Nature, Reason, Religion: else, this § of ours might run on to a most unwelcome length. — We know, for instance, that the Massagetans saw no harm in slaying the aged and sick; that the aborigines of Mexico immolated human victims to their Gods; that the Spartans by law destroyed their delicate offspring; that the Thugs of India religiously put to death whomsoever they chanced to meet; that a Virginus Claudius was besung for stabbing his daughter to protect her chastity; that a Marcus Brutus was heroified for assassinating his benefactor to save his country's liberty; and that the Roman Caesars without the slightest misgivings treated their subjects to theatrical exhibitions of barbarian captives who were compelled to reciprocal slaughter, &c. But, suchlike people were

Barbarians or Gentiles! Doubtless. Well, we likewise know that, for instance, the Rulers and Priests of France once united to murder in cold blood by night with meanest cowardice and fiendish treachery more than a score of thousands of quiet citizens and devout worshippers, and that Philip II, styling himself the Anointed king of Spain by the Grace of God, called the said inhuman butchery a triumph of the church militant, and that Gregory XIII, believed by millions upon millions of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Vicar of Christ upon this earth of ours, celebrated it in the church of St. Lewis at Rome by a solemn festival of thanksgiving; that the Inquisition, dubbing itself *holy*, denominated its feats of the fagot „acts of faith“ (autos da Fé); that the Revolutionary Tribunal, proclaiming that it was about to evoke the age of „Brotherhood“ (fraternité) boldly made guillotines, noyades, and fusillades do the work of *Cain*. And, suchlike people were Civilized and Christians! Unquestionably.

All which things, however, all penal codes in this nineteenth century of the era of Grace in our own „highly favored christian land“ and elsewhere in Christendom have agreed to denounce and condemn, omitting only, in proof of their human imperfection, any allusion, when discussing matters of this sort, to what is not the least ghastly and guiltful shape which the murder of a fellow-being may assume, that very frequent *slow* and *gradual*, albeit most deliberate, torturing, infallible, causing of death, to, for instance, those „arts which, born of infernal pride, poisoned hopes that outvie life in worth, and plunged a dart where it is mercy to stab mortally“, or, to that starvation-drudgery, or, to that seduction-infamy of which a lately deceased poet-priest, ordained by God himself, not long ago sang in strains which can never die until tenderest feeling, holiest imagination, and sweetest melody themselves be dead.¹⁾ —

Leaving these things for the Recording Angel on high to note down, and the Eternal Judge alone to punish, our criminal law speaks of „wilful murder“, carefully distinguishing it from „manslaughter“, i. e. merely unpremeditated, passionate, undesigned causing of the violent death of another, and it is this same wilful murder alone which we are called upon to bear in mind, whilst attempting to

¹⁾ I allude, of course, to Thomas Hood's Song of the Shirt and Bridge of Sighs. The previous quotation is only slightly altered from the Patrician's Daughter by Marston, V, 1.

institute a comparison between the relative guilt of murder and suicide.

Self-murder is a greater sin than the murder of another! This is the text. Is it really worth preaching a sermon on? Such arguments as the above cited phalanx of witnesses have employed are, surely, weapons altogether insufficient and unavailing to secure victory to their side, or to prove aught worth the trouble of disproof; and, if a parallel must be drawn between the comparative guilt of the one action and the other, I must confess myself utterly at a loss to conceive by what imaginable process of just reasoning and right feeling the murdering of another can be made out, logically and satisfactorily, a less guilty act than the slaying of one's self. Or, shall we subscribe to the dictum of Mrs. Honors — so-called in Fielding's master-work on the whimsical etymological principle of „*lucus a non lucendo*“ — who, when expressing her pious horror of suicide, observes¹⁾ „certainly it is less wicked to hurt all the world than one's own dear self, and so I heard said by more parsons (persons?) than one?“ If I remember rightly, the humorous novelist intended her to be simply a would-be sapient and an intolerably wordy impersonation and incarnation of absolutely shallow vulgarity. Or, shall we take for granted that, if a late English nobleman, instead of proclaiming that „everybody has a right to do what he likes with his own“, had preferred inditing as a pithy ethico-political saying that „everybody has a right to do what he likes with *his neighbour's*“ — his assertion would have been less questionable? Methinks, the incensed mob of Nottingham would have felt itself strongly tempted, instead of merely converting his fine ancestral castle into a heap of gutted ruins, to execute, nor without much good reason, Lynch-law upon his Lordship's person, and thus seal his oracular lips into everlasting muteness.²⁾ Or, if the decision in favor of murder versus suicide be given mainly upon the strength of the supposition that the murderer has time for the possibility of repentance, whereas the suicide has none, we might rather

¹⁾ Vide Tom Jones, vol. I, p. 313. ²⁾ That his late Grace of Newcastle actually did give utterance to the previous very debateable dictum, I know only from hearsay. However, the obituary notice in the Times, January, 1851, leads me to suppose that the said singularly bigoted and obstinate gentleman did himself and his country but little good by holding the said view, though, of course, only in reference to inherited landed possessions, or acquired pecuniary means.

reverse this proposition, and say: the suicide does, in point of fact, not *surprise* himself; he may take what time he pleases „to put his house in order“, whereas, on the contrary, the genuine assassin never will or can grant to the object of his bloody attack leisure for doing so, but rather places him, it may be, in a condition to complain, like the ghost of the murdered Danish king (Hamlet, I, 5):

„Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, unanointed, unanel'd;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.“

Though, however, I myself feel fully persuaded that, as regards the lot of a murdered man *too* on yonder side of the grave, God will *not* „take a catch of him“, the balance still inclines against murder rather than against suicide, since — and this is a chief law and test of all morality of action — we are enjoined „to do to others as we would that they should do unto us.“

But, leaving suchlike anecdotal, sarcastic, or pathetic apherisms aside — they tell their own tale and may suggest reflections which the reader is requested to pursue at his own leisure and in his own fashion —, the prevalent practice of all enlightened Christian Governments, in modern times at least, favors and proves the view that the guilt of suicide must be esteemed relatively smaller, and not greater, than that of the murder of another. Thus, as we shall learn in Sect. V, it has become during the last half-century or so, the longer the more, the desire and endeavor of legislature in Christendom to palliate the criminality, and to remit the ritual and fiscal punishment, of self-slaughter, many of the latest penal codes passing it over with utter silence, in some of them its punishability by human tribunals being softened down or argued away, &c. But, what rational and religious sovereign, parliament, legislator, though ever so humane, has inclined or dared, by public enactments, to cloak the guilt, or to abolish the penal visitation, of wilful murder, even in the most subtle and delicate form which it can assume, viz. tyrannicide? The opinions of isolated individuals shall not detain us; for we are concerned at present less with what is abstract right than with what has settled down into positive law. Thence, it shall not interest us over-much that e. g. the churchfather Origines seems (adv. Cels. I, 1, 1) to have been of opinion that those do not sin who secretly make a covenant for the purpose of dispatching a tyrant

who has unlawfully oppressed a free people;¹⁾ or, that a Jesuit Prior advised Clement to pray and examine more closely, whether God had really inspired into him the design to kill Henry III of France, that a Duchess of Montpensier promised him Saintship in the catholic church, that a Pope Sixtus V averred that the murderous deed had been performed with the immediate aid of God;²⁾ or, that the violent and biassed Scottish reformer John Knox held the doctrine that anybody may be slain by individuals, if he commit crimes which deserve death, and his power and position shield him against being reached in any other manner.³⁾ We will, rather, at once illustrate our thesis by the following twofold incident of modern date. On the one hand, the late Professor Fries was left by the political and ecclesiastical authorities of the Saxon Duchies in the undisturbed possession of the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the university of Jena, though he publicly and expressly, *ex cathedra* and in his printed works, vindicated, as we shall see in Sect. V, man's right to slay himself; whereas, on the other hand, the late Professor de Wette was immediately and inavertibly ignominiously dismissed from his professorial chair in the university of Berlin, where he was laboring in conjunction with such men as Schleiermacher and Neander as one of the most revered and meritorious Divinity Professors, because the words „so wie die That geschehen ist durch diesen reinen, frommen Jüngling, mit diesem Glauben, mit dieser Zuversicht, ist sie ein schönes Zeichen der Zeit“ occurred in a *private* letter of *condolence* which he had addressed to the afflicted mother of Sand, the assassin of Kotzebue.⁴⁾

It is a great idea on the part of the author of the Genesis already (ch. IV, 1—16) that in the most hoary antiquity of our race Cain is represented as feeling that murder is a crime of such exceeding magnitude and intensity as to deserve death, to merit no

¹⁾ Vide Stäublin, *Geschichte der Sittenlehre Jesu*, B. II, pp. 283, 284, 570.

²⁾ It would appear to be certain that the Jesuits in their system of ethics absolutely condemned regicide (Institut. II, 5); but it is equally certain that their most zealous disciples mistook their meaning on this point. Vide e. g. Raumer's *Geschichte Europa's seit dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, B. III, pp. 316, 340. ³⁾ Cf. *ibid.* B. II, p. 432. ⁴⁾ Vide *Altensammlung über die Entlassung des Professors Dr. de Wette vom theologischen Lehramt zu Berlin*, von ihm selbst herausgegeben, 1820, pp. 4, 5. I may be silent as well about Kotzebue's character and doings as about Sand's principles and motives and de Wette's noble-minded and tender-hearted but, as I take it, rash and mistaken, part in this tragedy, since many books exist from which the reader, if he choose, can gather complete information concerning these painful matters.

forgiveness, — and that God does not forgive it, though he does not immediately punish it with death. The slayer's very denial of his deed is testimony sufficient that he condemned himself. It is note-worthy, too, that the early Hebrew legislator deemed it unnecessary to motify his „thou shalt do no murder“ by arguing the wickedness of the action, by specifying reasons for the prohibition. His silence on the why and wherefore may be presumed to imply that he took for granted the conscience of man as such would supply the needful tuition. But, to what purpose should we multiply such observations? What human being is there now-a-days among us who, if he be but moderately moralized and instructed, does not feel and discern that to commit murder upon his fellow-being is wrong and sin? Or, if such a human being did exist in a civilized community, and were actually to commit such murder on the plea of being unable to perceive the wrong and sin thereof, would not everybody *even rather* put him out of harm's way and the sight of man as one who had become alienated from his kind, or, as one who had never possessed the distinguishing attributes of human nature, or, as simply a lunatic, than deal with him as a reasoning creature and examine him by an ordinary trial and condemn him by a regular verdict as a responsible criminal? This on the one hand. And, on the other hand, as we shall learn in Sect. V, sundry able and amiable *christian* moralists — not to say anything just now of Greek and Roman *pagan* ones — have not scrupled to raise their potent voices loudly in vindication of suicide as an act which every rational being may lawfully and even nobly commit in accordance with the dictates of his nature, and in confirmation of the freedom of his will, as an act which, in fine, marks and proves his prerogative and sovereignty above the mere brute and over the accidents of external destiny.

§. 7. The term Voluntary Death.

The Romans would seem to have had only one substantive-expression for the act we are now discussing: „*mors voluntaria*“, a sort of circum-locution which, if scrutinized, appears inexact and only partially true, less satisfactory to the understanding than pleasing to the feelings. We know, indeed, that the classic ancients had, when speaking of, or representing, Death in general, accustomed themselves

to employ gentler words and more genial images than we modern christians incline to use; cf. e. g. *abire* and *vixisse* instead of *mortuum esse*, the torch-inverting Genius instead of our scythe-bearing Skeleton, the God of Death himself, *Thanátos*, with sable wings and sword-bearing hand:¹⁾ which same words and images we may regard as softening forms (*μελίσματα*) in Language and Art. The less earnest and simple a people becomes in its relations to the terrible realities of destiny — this observation may be pardoned here —, the more willing and apt it grows to throw a veil or gauze for purposes of partial concealment and sentimental refinement over what is in itself nude and hideous: thus, too, we ourselves, departing from the good old custom and vernacular of our Anglosaxon ancestors, have manifoldly borrowed and adopted from *Romanic* sources, viz. our Norman invaders and our Gallic neighbours, in reference to moral transgressions, social delinquencies, and religious unvertities similar *μελίσματα*, which will readily suggest themselves by dozens to the sincere and thoughtful. But to return. Since suicide was rarely, if ever, a crime in the eyes of the Romans (*vide* Sect. I), the term under consideration appears natural, excusable, sufficient; but its having been received, or translated, into most languages of Europe, e. g. *mort volontaire*, voluntary death, *freiwilliger Tod*, not by any means with the design or desire to exculpate or soften down the act of self-destruction, seems to me a somewhat questionable procedure, and more or less notionally incorrect, inasmuch as, though all suicide is, of course, in its aspect and effect voluntary death, yet every voluntary death is not by any means, morally speaking, suicide.

In very many, nay, by far the greater number, of modern Schools, Systems, Books the duty of self-preservation is laid down as the fundamental rule of the Law of Nature, from which the principles of all individual, domestic, and social duties are deduced. And this is wise and good, as far as it goes; but it is not, therefore, either the wisest or the best. Speaking ethically, self-preservation is only, and can be nothing more than, a *conditional* duty, because Right stands above Life, and Guilt is a greater ill than Death. What

¹⁾ E. g. in the *Alkestis* of Euripides. The reader might also here remember those expressions on Death and Sepulture which Longinus (*de Subl.* c. 28) has collected from Plato's writings; and Virgil's well-known description (*Aen.* IV, 691) of Juno's quick and sympathetic interference towards facilitating the flight of life from the suicidal Carthaginian Queen.

Morality prescribes and enjoins is a certain mode of action, whether such mode of action guard and preserve, or peril and forfeit, our mortal existence. Thus, man by acting ethically may *voluntarily incur death*, i. e. deliberately provoke it, e. g. from the hands of others, without himself inflicting it in any immediate manner upon himself.¹⁾ In such instances, human life becomes, as it were, a tragic poem; for much of what constitutes the quintessence and acme of tragic poetry is the struggle, more or less fearful, in the individual soul between two apparent or veritable opposite duties which seem to collide, or really do collide.

Oh! let us not over-estimate our wonderful so-called „Moral Philosophy“ with its many „thou shalt nots“ or „thou shalt“, with its various definitions of Wrong and limitations of Right, with its „flee that“ and „seek this.“ It has not, it cannot have, it ought never to aspire to have, an *absolute* value. Despite all its sophistic minutiae and eloquent pathos, even the humblest among us, if we but have a thoughtful mind and a sensitive conscience, can scarcely fail on our simplest daily walk ever and anon to be impressed in saddest reality with doubts and difficulties on some points, doubts to us as dark as the most labored quibblings of Stoical paradoxa, difficulties to us as dense as the most closely-spun webs of Jesuitical casuistry. Be its definitions on general questions ever so acute, be the points involved in comprehensive principles ever so sacred, still appearances and delusions will waver hither and thither, unless we can succeed in grasping and holding fast the individual case in all its specific bearings and in its all-sided proportions. And, who can promise unto himself always to succeed in doing so? Let us, then, rather discern, admit, confess that to discover and enact what is *wholly right* for each of us at all seasons and in all situations a keener spiritual insight, a finer spiritual touch are needed than man possesses in his present sphere and phase of being: they are, I trust and believe, reserved for another, higher state of existence. Therefore, as I take it, Ethics in general must ever remain on Earth a *relative* science only; and, as it is with moral science itself so it is likewise with human life in its *physical* manifestation amid

¹⁾ By way of illustration, for the present, the reader might remind himself of e. g. the deaths of Publius Crassus, Cajus Attilius, Harmonia, Volaminius as recounted by Valerius Maximus libb. III and VI of a work (*dictorum factorumque memorabilia*) we shall often have to revert to in the sequel.

society's organisms and disorganisms; for, this same human life is the main object and inhold of moral science. Mortal existence has not an absolute, but *only* a relative, worth. Mere *natural* love of life is purely an *animal* instinct, is, at all events, what every beast of the field, and bird of the air, and fish of the waters possesses in common with man, nay, possesses, haply, often in a still higher degree, a still more intense form than man; and — (vide, however, § 14) —, perchance, not the least noble privilege of man, not his least glorious prerogative, in comparison with the mere animal, is the very privilege and prerogative of consciously and designedly violating, by force of the moral law of *self-devotion*, the natural law of self-preservation, i. e. of joyfully staking, and fondly losing, physical life for some higher object than physical life itself is, of preferring a „voluntary death“ to either flight from, or omission of, such duty, whether towards religion, or fatherland, or love, or self-respect, as not only necessarily involves, but also immediately entails, the perishing of his individual visible existence. For, methinks, not only all genuine *Heathen* poetry, but likewise all profound *Christian* philosophy, have ever taught and ever will teach what a living poet-philosopher of our own conveys (Bayley, *Festus*, pp. 62. 63) in few and not new, but most true and inholdful words, when he proclaims:

„We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.

— — — — — He most lives
Who thinks most; feels the noblest; acts the best.

— — — — —
Life is but a means unto an end. That end,
Beginning, mean, and end to all things — God.“

We, therefore, strongly incline to put in our humble protest against the use of the term which I have placed in the superscription of this short §, if the act meant to be thereby designated is what the writer employing it wishes himself to represent, and by others to be considered, as *criminal* (literal) self-slaughter. — So much by way of threshold across which we now step into the more minute enquiry which will constitute the contents of the next §.

§. 8. The relation of Self-devotion to suicide.

About the beauty and duty of *self-sacrifice*, in its deepest nature and most general aspects, there exists no doubt among all earnest

and reflective christians, and, therefore, there cannot be among them any dispute. All genuine domestic and social life implies and requires it; without it there can be no childhood, no parenthood, no brotherhood among men, no charity, no tuition, no government, no love, no trust, no truth, no religion. Self-sacrifice, however, in the usual acceptation of the term, involves at the utmost only *exposure* of life to the dangers of poverty, disease, enmity, warfare, death, only the *risking* and *staking* of life, when noble objects have to be pursued, unselfish aims to be realized, moral victories to be achieved. Then self-sacrifice, in its uttermost sublimity and final exertion, willingly and cheerfully hurls temporal life, in gage of *battle*, at the opposing foe, though it should win death as life's great prize, win it by fervor and by faith. — But, what we here understand by, and wish to treat of as, *self-devotion*, is something more than that which we ordinarily conceive under the designation of self-sacrifice: is a conscious and deliberate willing and causing of one's own certain and immediate death to avert the wrath of Nemesis from one's own country, or to direct her will and power against its foe. The very term itself points us to classic antiquity in whose language there was a distinct religious idiom for the act;¹⁾ and yon Marcus Curtius, yon two Decii, yon Codrus, yon Menoeceus, yon Makaria, yon two Carthaginian brothers, concerning each and all of whom stand written the needful chronicles on the pages of e. g. Livy, Pliny, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Statius, Euripides, will quickly occur to the reader's memory as pertinent illustrations and examples of giving one's self voluntarily up to the powers of death and the grave, to the earth's widely yawning crevice, to the sword of the enemy, or, to one's own. It matters little, whether such deeds be historic or mythic; for in either case the manifestation of doctrine and spirit remains the same; in either case they, *too*, „being dead, by faith yet speak“ (Hebr. XI, 4); for they, Phoenix-like, have risen anew, out of a self-wrought death, into a loftier and more sacred vitality, even spiritual influence and poetic immortality, and, their memories having sunk deeply into humanity's heart of admiration, love, and reverence, the guardian-angel of our race points still to them as glory-garlanded self-victims whose spirits stand aloft on the ruined

¹⁾ *Se devovere, viz. diis manibus tellurique, whence carmen devotionis, cf. e. g. Pliny, H. N. XXVIII, 3.*

watch-towers of the ancient world, and beckon and bid unto modern christian man to follow in their footsteps, if occasion call.

It is true, modern christian man's position unto suchlike deed is a more or less different one. Among the Pagans of classical antiquity, not only was a certain measure of contempt of Death esteemed a necessary effect and evidence of manliness, philosophy, and patriotism, but was, perhaps, likewise not a very difficult virtue for them to attain to. *Their „mind's eye“* was not wont to look so keenly or so anxiously at what sort of destiny might await the human spirit, after its temporary bodily tent should have been broken up and removed; unto most of *them* it seemed enough that, if the soul crumbled not with the body into one and the same atomic grave, it could not flee from the consciousness of its own self, but would carry „its all“ along with it, and retain in the Yonder the impressions and elements of the Here, like as the ocean-conch, when drifted ashore, harbors — thus I have once read — still the waters' sound. Far otherwise with the generality of us. *We* read, hear, reflect, ponder, imagine, believe, hope and fear so much that over all our speculations, doubts and misgivings as to whether we shall be numbered among the blessed or the doomed, we forget or overlook that the „many mansions“, wherever they may be, cannot be aught but stages and states unto which our individual fitness alone must procure us access, be our life long or short, our death slow or sudden; and, thence, so many among *us* would fain implore God, when the summoning voice of death strikes upon our ear, to stop the knell of time for a few years, months, weeks, days, hours, or even minutes that we might meditate or pray, nay, perchance, even also hoard or wallow, a brief while longer.

But, that we may gain some tangible foundation upon which to place and raise such remarks as we would fain offer, I will approach the attempt at removing some of the difficulties which here lie in our way by first of all relating a true story, of modern date, which might be most appropriately designated as „stranger than fiction.“ The volume which will serve me as the principal source of the following narrative ¹⁾ appeared anonymously; but internal as well as external evidence leaves no doubt about the authorship (Dr. Mundt, a well-known Berlin literary character, who had been one of the deceased

1) Charlotte Stieglitz. Ein Dentmal, 1835.

lady's most intimate friends). This same biographical sketch is written with extreme eloquence and pathos; but by far the most interesting and touching portion of it consists in the letters and reflections of Charlotte Stieglitz herself which permit us to look, as through transparent glass, into a female heart full of ideal beauty, heroic nobleness, and of intensest suffering in its feeble physical frame-work, and the most striking feature in whose character was an utter absence of *egoism*.¹⁾ I will epitomize the whole book with *scrupulous fidelity*, and always refer the reader to those pages which contain ~~ought~~ that is most significant for our specific purpose.

Charlotte Sophie Willhöft, born at Hamburg in the year 1806, was the youngest daughter of a respectable merchant. Nature had dowered her with more than ordinary abilities; her education was conducted with assiduity and liberality; and, in addition to her gifts and accomplishments, she possessed great personal loveliness and extreme sweetness of disposition and gracefulness of demeanor. When she was still a school-girl, her favorite teacher and the one who exercised the greatest influence over her, was *evangelically orthodox* (pp. 3, 4, 67); a circumstance we shall do well not to forget, since much of what at a comparatively early period of her life developed itself in her as what has been termed²⁾ „a troubled fantastic view of life, a dim longing after a future world, and a misconception of the proper task of life“ would seem, doubtless, to have been, in a great measure, ascribable to the medium of his well-meant, but injudicious, tuition and guidance. — In the year 1828, she married, after a considerably prolonged betrothment, Heinrich Stieglitz, a young man of great classical acquirements and of more than common poetic talents, whose enthusiastic determination had ever been, and still remained, to win for himself no mean rank and name among the favorite authors and minstrels of his native land. Unfortunately, however, for himself, he proved to be of that class of aspirants after literary fame whose ambition is greater than their powers, and who, therefore, tax a naturally over-sensitive brain more heavily than it can bear, would fain extract and extort from their individual thought and imagination more than these had been organized and destined to yield, and then fret and fume, because per-

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. pp. 8, 9, 68, 82, 104, 166, 208, 212, 215, 298. ²⁾ Vide the article *Rachel, Bettina und Charlotte Stieglitz* in the *Conversationslexicon der Gegenwart*.

formance falls short of expectation, and the Realities seem to mock and shock the Ideal. Unfortunately, likewise, for poor Charlotte, Heinrich Stieglitz's poetic imaginings and aspirings constituted the glory of her heart, from the very commencement of her auspicious engagement until the tragic end of her saddened wedded life. Thence, some time before their marriage already, the intensely affectionate girl conceived a fear that her lover's distinction and immortality might be checked or prevented by his engagement to her, since the latter would, doubtless, induce him, if it did not actually compel him, to look out *too soon* for some mere livelihood-ensuring situation, and then to apply himself exclusively to it. Under this apprehension she actually then already made an attempt to starve herself to death, and thus to vanish from the stage of life in a manner slow and unnoticed, but not on that account less sure and voluntary. So little did she care what might become of herself, if only her betrothed one's lot should ultimately prove a successful and a happy one (*ibid.* p. 20). A mere accident caused that utterly unselfish, though extremely ill-judged, attempt to fail; and she consented to live on, somewhat reconciled to herself by considering the earnest will as equal, morally speaking, to the completed act. This incident in the career of the betrothed virgin may in some degree prepare us for that deed of the devoted wife, some years later, which we are now hastening to recount.

The bridal came; and after it travellings to and fro, physical ailments, pecuniary embarrassments, amusements and visitings, laborings and plannings, and — childlessness. This a brief summary of our young wedded couple's *outward* life: and it is not essentially dissimilar from that of many others born into the same social station and placed in similar circumstances; but our present concernment is with their *inner* life chiefly, if not solely.

The husband's external position was, he thought, at warfare with his internal vocation. We will believe it really to have been so: by more or less mechanical and wearisome work he had to earn his daily bread; but, is this not the lot and fate of most of the poetically inclined literary men of every country, and of Germany, perhaps, most especially, where the laborers in the vineyard are so many, and the wages of industry and capacity so low? Then however, reason, courage, religion bid *man* make toil, though incongenial, a duty, and evoke poetry out of simple, useful, honest

work; for he was born and sent into this world to labor, and not to dream; and it is good and salutary even for the poet to have a profession, or a business, or a trade. But alas! far otherwise, Heinrich Stieglitz viewed and took this matter: he sank, irrationally and unrighteously, the longer the more into a mentally stagnant, an importless, a veritably demoniac state, and became visibly and helplessly a prey to boundless melancholy, despondency, and despair, nay, almost to — madness. In vain it was *then* that his wife day by day summoned and exerted her inmost being with all its genuinely womanly prudence, purity and self-denying and self-sacrificing tenderness to let it descend like a genial, gentle, fructifying vernal shower upon yon blighted, parched-up, unsound and unsightly soil; in vain — for no fragrant flowers would thereon grow, no wholesome fruit would thrive thereon. — Well, we have thus rapidly come to the 29th day of December in the year 1834.

Eleven days previously, Dec. 18, Heinrich Stieglitz had narrated to his wife a most strange dream (pp. 289, 290), from which she had inferred, and not unreasonably, that his losing her in some *sudden* manner by some *violent* means would be one way, if not the only one, of arousing him out of his lethargic, lethal slumber into a new, vigorous, happy life of health and hope; and she forthwith resolved upon putting the verity of that fitful, fatal dream of her husband's to a rigid and an infallible test by a fearful, an irrevocable deed. Both of them had been invited to a concert for the evening of the said 29th day of December; but she, assigning weariness as her motive for wishing to remain at home, bade him go alone; and he went. Prior, however, to this their final parting, she, a Protestant and a Believer, discussed with him in her own way the signification of the *sacrificial death of the Lord* (p. 306).

He having now gone, the night is advancing upon her lonesome hearth, and her still more lonesome heart. She rings for her servant whom she enjoins to have everything in readiness for her husband's comfort before his return. She arranges all her household matters with such most scrupulous accuracy and diligence as she was wont to bestow upon them. And then — — she washed herself, attired herself in cleanly night-robes — they were to be her shroud —, wrote on tear-moistened paper, yet legibly, as with a steady hand, some few farewell words, replete with encouragement, counsel and deepest affection, to her husband, — laid herself in her

little bed, and — plunged that dagger, which had been her own sportive gift to her husband on their bridal day (p. 22), with unerring aim into her heart. — — —

Much need not be here said about the man who survived such a wife nearly seventeen years. He would seem, as I have previously hinted, ever to have borne and cherished in his imagination and soul an Idol which he mistook for a Divinity, some vague aspiration which he confounded with a determinate object, some limitless ambition to achieve a great poetical work which same ambition he persuaded himself into considering as identical with, as evidence and proof of, such power and genius as would suffice for the achievement itself, if only leisure and mood were afforded to him. It was, then, such an over-estimate of himself, such constant looking out for what did not come, and could not come, since it must have come from within, and not from without, that gradually and finally haunted, hunted Heinrich Stieglitz into that deplorable state of mental and moral disorganization which we have already delineated as briefly and as graphically as we could. Yet, let us not judge him too rashly, or too harshly. On the one hand, there are „morbid and heavy-laden temperaments, which seem appointed to suffer that which, in the happier maniac, *insanity relieves*“; and christian charity suggests to us the belief that he too — we may think in passing of Cowper and Tasso and even Rousseau — was of such sort. And, on the other hand, we are bound to assume that, since a Charlotte Willhöft not only freely chose him for her husband, and loved him deeply through life, but even unto death, nay, thought him worth voluntarily dying for, he cannot have been, originally and essentially, devoid of some of the very best attributes of our nature. And, finally, his subsequent doom, no matter now, whether unmerited or deserved, ought to render him an object rather of sacred pity than of hasty condemnation to every feeling breast. His sorely tried wife had been grievously at fault in her mystic reckoning; her most subtle sophistry proved a mere *ignis fatuus*; her so deliberate reflection turned out to be the sheerest over-strained rashness; the object she had bleedingly grasped at eluded her dying hand; her last deep living hope was wofully disappointed; the evil spirit her cold corpse was to lay, it but evoked into intenser potency and encreased activity. For, as we have learnt from various recent accounts, Heinrich Stieglitz wandered since 1834 from

land to land, a Cainlike fugitive, spell-bound, spirit-broken, God-stricken, as it were, until he fell a victim to the cholera at Venice, some four years ago; nor was it without emotion that I read of his body's being, after a while, conveyed thence to Berlin that it might take its last rest beside the ashes of her who had loved him „net wisely, but too well.“ — Of the many books he wrote, both before and after Charlotte's death, none is, I believe, destined to immortality.

Theodor Mundt, in the work already quoted, abstains from pronouncing any verdict upon Charlotte Stieglitz's last deed; but the anonymous writer of the article in the *Conversationslexicon des Gegenwart*, to which I have already alluded, at the conclusion records what follows: „it is beautiful that the Church adopted her error reconciliatorily; a Clergyman delivered at her grave a cordial, electrifying (*herzliche, erschütternde*) oration.“ However, despite much oral enquiry, I have not been able to ascertain either who this clergyman was, or what was the exact tenor and inhold of his funeral sermon over her corpse. His task, whether self-imposed or in the natural order of official duty, must have been extremely difficult and delicate to do justice to. A sentimental twaddler or a Boanerges-bigot would have welcomed it and lusted after it; but only a deep-minded and a noble-hearted theologian and moralist could solve it aright, or at all. In sundry German periodicals of that time, the deed under mention was, I believe, discussed to and fro; but the articles therein contained have remained unknown to me. However, I have perused an English essay, written a dozen years ago,¹⁾ upon the tale we have told. It is composed with much feeling, but not quite faithfully, inasmuch as the Reviewer evidently desired to ignore, exclude, suppress everything that might, according to his notion of things, compromise Religion. He, therefore, has not recorded Charlotte's last conversation with her husband, upon which, nevertheless, most of what characterizes her deed rests; nor has he taken any notice of her previously excited and over-stretched evangelical tendency and creed. Thence, he regards the whole saddening occurrence as a birth of German unfaith: whilst — thus he expresses himself on p. 174 — Charlotte Stieglitz's „virtues were a ceaseless illustration of the Scriptures, her error (i. e. her death) was the natural consequence of *their denial*.“

¹⁾ British and Foreign Quarterly for 1843, pp. 142—187.

We cannot here more than merely allude to the reference which occurs in the above narrative to our „Great Teacher“ and highest example, the New Covenant's founder and centre; for, on a much later occasion, we shall have to speak at considerable length of his self-sacrifice and self-devotion on the altar of our earth for the restoration and regeneration of a benighted and strayed human race. At present, I will content myself with stating preliminarily two or three points. Firstly, some of those who reject his name, Jews, have not hesitated to declare his manifest deed of „bleeding love“ even unto death — *suicide*; and also! a still larger number of these who bear his name, Christians, of modern skeptical or frivolous complexion and character, have viewed it in the same light (vide §. 63). Secondly, even several of the churchfathers, e. g. Chrysostomos, did not scruple to impart to it, although almost unconsciously as it were, a similar coloring, when they were anxious to defend a certain species of martyr-suicide in their somewhat strange hyperbolical strains. Nay, one of them, Origenes, not only likens Jesus' not fleeing from that death which he saw coming, though he was able to do so, to Sokrates' behaviour, when in prison, and puts forward His dying as instruction that man must not shrink from dying for the sake of godliness and a courageous confession of his faith before man, but — and this is what here more particularly concerns us — also¹⁾ draws a parallel between His death and the deaths of those Pagans who voluntarily died for their people or country in the belief of thereby putting a stop to divinely sent plagues, it being a God-appointed, as it were sympathetic, means laid in Nature that the power of evil spirits is broken by the voluntary death of an innocent person! Thirdly, sundry undoubtedly devout and even orthodox modern moralists do not scruple, when discussing suicide, to introduce the case of Jesus as a fit illustration of the willing and ready giving up of one's life for a highest purpose, though, as we shall endeavor to show in several §§ of Sect. V, they would have done better on suchlike occasions to omit altogether their ecclesiastical trinity- and atonement-theories, lest they should get into various peculiar and almost unavoidable straits, to which we shall draw attention in §§. 62—64. — Voluntary death

¹⁾ Viz. in his elaborate work against Celsus, lib. I, p. 24 in Spencer's *ed.* I take this notice, however, from Rössler's *Bibliothek der Alten. Väter*, 1776 ff., Th. II, p. 207, Num. 173. Vide *ibid.* also pp. 214, 216, 256.

the death of Jesus, doubtless, was, and self-devotion too, though anything but wilful suicide into which not only vulgar and wanton perverseness has misconstrued it, but likewise occasionally even refining mysticism without which latter, nevertheless, speaking quite in general, religious ethics are, perhaps, impossible.

Any misconception, however, concerning Jesus' own laying down of his life (ἀθῆναι ψυχῇν) for the brethren, i. e. for mankind in general and for every individual member of the human community, cannot but engender a misconception also concerning the duty of his disciples who are bidden to go forth and do like wise,¹⁾ i. e. a misconception of the very watch-word of yon hymn which o'er Bethlehem's shepherd-fields ushered the stall-cradled child into this world of ours, as of the very burthen of yon dirge which sounded in the unearthly agonies of Gethsemane's garden, and amid the supernatural darkness of Golgotha's hill, when the divine man returned unto his and our Father who had sent him, and of the key-note of yon gospel-chant which has proved both triumph and wail to our race for more than eighteen hundred years.

Under some such *misconception*, then, Charlotte Stieglitz labored. More we cannot, will not, dare not affirm. To insinuate, as the anonymous English reviewer has done, that her deed was a consequence of her „denial“ of the Scriptures, is, as it seems to me, altogether unwarrantable; for this latter verdict, view it as we may, presupposes antithesis between her life and her death, instead of the synthesis which in this case manifestly existed. Her whole life had been only as a *living dying* unto her husband, that attained to its consummation in her ultimate action, which was, therefore, consistent and almost inwardly necessary; we might say, her previous life reared the leaves and tended the flowers out of which conclusively her death-chaplet and tomb-wreath of themselves twined themselves: like unto the silk-worm, her life-work was her self-wrought grave. „Denial“ postulates antagonism, negation, from unbelief or from unknowledge. But with her there was, on the contrary, rather over-belief, a pondering too deeply, an appropriating of too much, and, if darkness at all, a „darkness from excess of light“, and, if such light „led astray“, it was „yet, light from Heaven.“ —

¹⁾ Vide John X, 11, 17, 18; XII, 25; XV, 13; Matth. XVI, 26; 1 John III, 16; Titus II, 14.

Nevertheless, we are not by any means minded to affirm that her death must not be regarded as literally and completely *suicide*, according to every legitimate and unsophisticated definition of the term, though she thought it justified, sanctified, typified by the death of Jesus; but we scrupulously withhold any verdict of condemnation, lest we should be found among those „fools (who) rush in where angels fear to tread“, and lest to our sacerdotal zeal Laertes' words might justly apply: „a minist'ring angel she shall be, when thou liest howling.“¹⁾

Under the rule of Christianity, self-devotion in the *Classically Paganic* sense of the term is simply a moral impossibility. No dark, double-tongued Oracles prophesy and vouchsafe our foe's defeat, or our country's rescue, or our relation's prolongation of life, or our friend's increase of felicity upon similar conditions: no soothsayer Tiresias, for instance²⁾ longer induces a Menoeceus, Creon's son, to stab himself before the gates of Thebes that victory may accrue to the Thebans; no God Phoebus Apollo's interference with the Fates, for instance,³⁾ longer moves an Alcestis, the Thessalian king Admetus' wife, to add to her husband's term of life by dying voluntarily in his stead; and no mysterious worship of Isis longer exists in which, for instance, as we are assured,⁴⁾ devotion to a voluntarily chosen death, and regain of life through the favor of the Goddess, were celebrated and represented as one of the chief elements. — Nevertheless, what was veritably noble and beautiful in *any* Religion must needs remain a proper and soulful element in *all* Religions, justly so called, and is, as we believe, to be found under the influence of true Christocracy in its *widest* and *deepest* sense. Let us, therefore, „learn, mark, and inwardly digest“ what of the Holiest, what of sublimity, what of spheric music and ethical beauty there is in suchlike Mythology and Minstrelsy of ancient days. „To admire Alcestis' death constitutes a better moral training than Paley's Philosophy or Aristotles' Ethics can give. Whatever throws the heart out of Self and swallows it up into some noble or beautiful Idea, affords to the moralist precisely that which he wants,

¹⁾ They are uttered, as everybody knows, in reference to his suicidal sister Ophelia (Hamlet V, 1). The other inverted commas mark phrases of Milton's, Burns' and Young's which seemed to me to express most beautifully and most briefly what I desired to convey. ²⁾ Vide e. g. Statius' Theb. lib. X, and especially lines 780—782: „Ast illum — in astris.“ ³⁾ Cf. Euripides' already quoted drama. ⁴⁾ Vide Apulejus, Metamorph. lib. XI towards the end.

but cannot get within his own science. He may, as it were, build an elegant Engine, but he has to look elsewhere for Heat and Moving Power. Enthusiasm is the Life to Morality; and to excite a pure and reasonable Enthusiasm is the great moral end of Religion.“ Thus F. W. Newman¹⁾ writes aptly and eloquently concerning Euripides' tragedy of Alcestis, and he might, with equal justice, have extended the same observation to the latter half of the identical tragic writer's Iphigenia in Aulis, to the part which Makaria enacts in his Heraklidae, and to that which Menoikeus enacts in his Phoenissae. —

Those Classically Paganic heroic myths were wont to assume and affirm that an immediate divine voice held out to the self-devotees above alluded to a most distinct and potent inducement to rush into, or, to inflict upon themselves, certain sudden death; for, in those myths, taking all in all, the presumptive oracle was specific and positive both as to the means, i. e. the sacrifice required, and the issue, i. e. the success ensured. Such self-devotees, therefore, only yielded up their lives in willing and heroic obedience to the inexorable exigencies of the higher Necessities, their hearts re-echoing the first great item in their national Credo, to which Horace has lent a voice in the simple well-known words „dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.“ It was not they who sought death; it was, rather, death which sought them; they did not flee from life, but fled, rather, only to the highest end of individual existence's use; neither sensual discomfort, i. e. hatred of life, nor selfish avarice, i. e. love of death, drove them hence; we might even say that, in point of fact, they did not so much kill themselves as they were killed, viz. by the fulfilment of patriotic duty, by the assumption of vicarious priestliness, by the divine *ἄναγκη* and fatum. They, too, in their own dialect and method, would — I trust that nobody will discover irreverence in what is anything but irreverently meant — have prayed: „if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless.“ — But, that same „nevertheless“ demanded their self-devotional death as a *religious* act.

Christianity, however, does not pretend to afford to man, and, therefore, does not require of man to listen to, any suchlike *special* oracular voices and decrees; wherefore, sundry Churchfathers and

¹⁾ The Soul, her sorrows and her aspirations, p. 16 of edit. 1.

Fanatics, Mystics and Jesuits were, as we shall see in Sections IV and V, manifestly in error, when they stipulated for an *express divine revelation* to certain Saints who destroyed themselves, by way of justifying and hallowing their suicide. But of this by and by again. — Under the christian dispensation, self-devotion is simply and solely the love of our neighbour in its intensest potency, in its culminating manifestation. When Paul (vide 1 Cor. XIII, 5, and Phil II, 4, 5) defines „love seeketh not her own“; when he enjoins „look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others“, and proceeds „let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus“, — he is prescribing and promulgating *essentially* those *religious principles* in which self-devotion is implied, if occasion call for it, leaving the individual case to the revelation of our own heart, to the oracle of our own reason. — Let us, then, by way of example and illustration write down what follows. Since warfare against a tyrant (who is himself the real rebel against law, order, justice and right) is not rebellion, but justifiable and noble self-defence in the name and cause of humanity and christianity, von Arnold von Winkelried performed an act of self-devotion, when he „opened a path unto liberty“ through his spear-pierced breast. Since the soldier's vocation is a legalized necessity in the existent (imperfectly converted and organized) condition of the christian States, that sentinel who sets fire to a mine under his post, or that captain who lights the powder-cask of the vessel upon which he is placed, and is thus blown to atoms, lest the enemy of his country should gain any palpable advance and promising advantage, performs an act of self-devotion. Since fidelity to one's Monarch or Master is a self-evident element in the spiritual chivalry of all christian social life, whosoever voluntarily bares his heart to receive the fatal bullet or deadly thrust which was aimed at him or her to whom he had sworn or owed faithfulness even unto death, has performed an act of self-devotion. Since protection of the oppressed, aid to the weak, affection for parent, offspring, or friend are undeniably recognized attributes of practical and heroic christianism, whoever, not only at the imminent risk, but even with the certainty of the immediate loss, of life plunges into flood or fire with a single-eyed view to the rescue of the otherwise lost, performs a deed of self-devotion.

Of course, I do not, and cannot, mean to maintain that all the instances I have just given are in their nature identical; for, it is self-evident that, on the one hand, whereas in some of them duty evolves itself as absolute, because *vocation* enjoins it, in others rather a work of supererogation, something relative, a mere suggestion and emanation of *magnanimity*, is alluded to and borne in mind; and that, on the other hand, whereas in some of them a direct and an arbitrary use was made of that power which nature had laid in man's own arm, in others rather an antagonistic power which circumstance supplied was designedly directed against one's own life. Were, indeed, mere casuistic moral philosophy either to our taste or to our purpose, we could easily argue each separate exemplification to and fro, summoning various evidence and adducing sundry conditioning circumstances either to substantiate or to modify our verdict. Leaving, however, suchlike (for the present at least), we will content ourselves with maintaining that, if the actor in the cases previously supposed (or, kindred ones) aim at the realization of a *moral* object (for fatherland, relative, friend, or fellow-being) which he conscientiously considers *deserving* of the sacrifice of his own sensuous existence, and make the sacrifice, not in the feeling that material life is of small value, or, none, or, worse than worthless, to him, but, rather, in the conviction that it is the greatest and „ownest“ sacrifice he has to make, and in the consciousness that something essentially and infinitely different from his own wish to die lies in his heart's „deep innermost“ core: then, as we think, the *more voluntary* the act is, the *less suicidal* it is, because the *less selfish*, and, if I may thus express myself, the *less sensual* too, inasmuch as it is, as it were, Spirituality triumphing over Flesh and Blood. Nor will I hesitate to add — merely silently again urging a request I made a few moments ago — that, because such death-acts are of the essence of that pure and heroic self-renunciation which carries within itself its own „exceeding great reward“, they are, too, *though not in degree, yet in kind*, as legitimate and elevating a subject for Christian poetry and art as are the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Ascension of Him whom I need not here again name.

Yet, there is a something about our very question touching the relation of self-devotion to suicide which renders the task of fixing the boundary-line, which we are in quest of, from time to time more or less, nay, occasionally even extremely, difficult. The ear-

nestness of enthusiasm may sometimes interfere with the sharp-sightedness and searching severity of abstract thought and stereotype theories; the heart may perceive what the head cannot define; our clearness becomes as moonlight rather than as sunlight, and we feel tempted to admit that likewise these „strings, wound up too high, will snap.“ And this task has been rendered, if possible, still more difficult by manifold confusions in which sundry christian moralists, not entirely without the precedence of Pagan writers, have somehow managed to enwrap it. For instance, the elder Seneca already, when writing (vide §. 6) as sophist and rhetorician, draws attention, whilst alluding to the deaths of Codrus and Curtius, to the possible danger of inflicting punishment upon real self-slaughter, lest such legal visitation might tend to prevent or check similar deeds of sublime patriotism and disinterested virtue; and various christian moralists, e. g. Moore, Mme. de Staël, Holbach, Fries, have, sometimes from mere shallowness and over-haste, sometimes, too, from sheer frivolity and veriest wantonness, but likewise sometimes from most laudable scrupulousness and delicacy, found identity in mere resemblance, and confounded sacred self-devotion with sinful suicide, or vice versâ, so that we find Curtius and the two Decii placed side by side, whether vituperatively or laudingly, with Lucretia and Cato; Eleazar who „devoted himself“ (ἐδωκεν ἑαυτον; by the by, the identical expression is used by Paul of Jesus in Gal. I, 4, 1 Tim. II, 6, Tit. II, 14), that he might deliver his people, and get himself a perpetual name“ (1 Macc. VI, 43—46), with Saul; the early christian Martyrs, on account of their self-denunciation and self-extradition, with veritable suicides, etc. Vide more especially le système de la Nature as discussed in Section V; here I will content myself with merely mentioning that even so acute and serious a thinker as Fries (vide Sect. V) openly declared that, if any commandment against suicide existed or were admitted, he would see himself incapacitated from drawing, consistently and sharply, a boundary-line, aught but the veriest „prinzip“ and „verfärbene“ boundary-line between the venturing and sacrificing of one's life and suicide itself.

Nor can I pretend to be able, beyond such more or less merely indirect hints as I have already given, to shed any new and full lucidity over this twilight-theme. Such sayings as — you may find it quoted in some English anti-suicidal moralists, e. g. Moore, Dennis — „a living dog is better than a dead lion“ is simply as

coarse and grovelling as the royal Hebrew Epicurean from whom it is supposed to have originated,¹⁾ and are almost on a par with yon mythico-Satanic accusation of man's sensual selfishness²⁾ „yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life“, and like unto what Shakspeare places on the lips of the wretched Claudio:³⁾

„The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ach, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.“

And we reply to them, as does the high-souled Isabella in the just-named play, only with an „Alas! alas!“ — Yet, we would not say that Christian morality ever does or can *command* the voluntary privation of one's life, sudden and certain self-victimization, inasmuch as all christian morality is supposed to consist in successive and repeated moral action during earth-life, to the possibility of which successive repetition death puts a stop, as far at least as this life is concerned, and strictly ethical mandates can scarcely be affirmed to contain any clause which has reference to another life at the expense and to the exclusion of the real, probable, or even possible, future moral actions of the present life. No matter, whether what remains of time-life be, according to our own human computation, short or long, much or little; for, even though ever so little, it is still our all, and as such all is a treasure, sacred and invaluable, which Nature of her own accord will claim and take away, when it shall be done with or done for. Our *head*, therefore, must forbid us to *extol* Charlotte Stieglitz's last action, if we be thinking and writing systematically and scrupulously as christian moralists; for, what could not be commanded ere it was done, it may be hazardous even to *commend* after it has been done.

But — — — Have you not read e. g. in Carlyle's grand drama of the French Revolution the story of another Charlotte — Charlotte Corday I mean? And, though murder be and remain murder, as suicide is and remains suicide, and though clearest insight into the essence of Truth and Virtue may certify that in the end Good never comes out of unjustifiable means, has not your *heart* felt some misgivings about condemning her assassination of Marat? Oh, it is dangerous to deal with such anomalies and sole-

¹⁾ Ecclesiastes IX, 4. ²⁾ Job, II, 4. ³⁾ Measure for Measure, III, 1.

cisms in the ethieal world! Head and heart become, as it were, antagonistic poles, and draw different ways, and the „golden medium“ is difficult to find and grasp and hold fast.

„Nur bringen wir vor lauter Verboten setzen zu den Geboten selber hindurch, und brauchen sechs Wochentage, um auf einem Sonntage anzukommen. O, was zu fliehen ist, weiß sogar der Teufel; aber was zu suchen ist, war der Engel.“ „Unsere Moral scheint mir zu sehr eine Häuslichkeit-Moral, und mehr eine Sitten- als Thatenlehre. Sie ist bloß eine Geschnack-Lehre für das schaffende Genie. Es gibt eben sowohl sittliche Genie-Jäger, die darum nicht in Regeln und von Regeln zu fassen, also nicht voraus zu bestimmen sind, als es ästhetische gibt; beide indeß ändern allein die Welt und wehren der fortlaufenden Verflachung.“ „Es muß etwas Höheres zu suchen geben, als bloß Recht, d. h. nicht Unrecht zu thun — worauf doch die folgerichtige Sittenlehre sich eingränzt —; aber dies Höhere ist in einer Unentschiedenheit von Reizen und Bestimmungen so wenig durch das Sitten-Maßstab auszumessen, oder gar zu richten, als die raphaeleischen und die lebendigen Figuren durch mathematische Figuren.“ — These are, in their own peculiar and almost untranslatable original prose-poetic form, some few sentences I have extracted from the gifted, genial, spotless Jean Paul's monograph (with some of the reasonings in which, however, I cannot agree) on, i. e. defence and encomium of, Charlotte Corday. ¹⁾ Be pleased to think them over. — Or, if the reader should crave something more directly applicable to the case under discussion, I would fain remind him of what follows. In the early ages of Christianity sundry virgins and matrons slew themselves to escape un-willed violence from their lustful Pagan persecutors, conceiving that the mere sufferance thereof would be tantamount to the commission of a sin. This may have been an error on their part, nay, doubtless, was one, methinks; but, yet it was a beautiful error; and all those churchfathers, except Augustinus, who mention such deliberate and direct suicide of theirs, defend and extol it, and many of them liken it, as we shall learn on a later occasion, vide §. 71, for some reason or other to the death of Jesus, yea, for some reason even far less reasonable and much further-fetched, perchance, than Charlotte Stieglitz's own reason was. And not only was „their error reconciliatorily adopted by the Church“, and many „cordial, elec-

¹⁾ Sämmtliche Werke, B. III, pp. 90, 91, 92 in Ravenberger's Baderseife.

trifling orations delivered by ecclesiastics over their graves“, but some of them were even made *Saints* of, and the „*humanus affectus*“ of Augustinus closed his lips when they were ready to open, in obedience to his judgment, to call the wisdom of such a procedure into question. The later Protestant church, as we know, has wisely given up the practice of beatification and canonization, and leaves in humble trust and hope the spiritual worthiness of those she has loved and lost to be fixed by Him alone, who „searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.“ Therefore, all she can say about such suicidal heroines is, haply, what a pious protestant German divine of the last century wrote.¹⁾ „Dieser Tod war Stroh und Stoppeln, gebaut auf ihr Leben, welches Christus war. Das Feuer des Gerichts wird die Stoppeln verbrennen, aber ihr Leben in Christo wird bleiben.“ — Need we hesitate to pen the same epitaph on Charlotte Stieglitz?

Only one brief word more.

Ere thou, her sister-woman, canst undertake to do suchlike, thou must *be* as and what she *was*, thy inward necessities must have become unto thee both the Law and the Gospel, thy action must prove the result of all the insight thou hast *with diligence* acquired, the fruit of the entire character thou hast *by holiness* established, the product of the collective experience thou hast *carefully* gathered; thy courage and thy faith, thy strength and thy will must be fresh, free, original, organic; soberly, self-sustainedly, solitarily, spell-bound by thy own heart's enthusiasm and urged on by thy own reason's instinct, thou must do thy death-work simply and fully, without aught artificial or affected, any silly fame-courting or petty self-adulation as far as this world is concerned, and without any sanctimonious prayings, convulsive misgivings, casuistic pleadings, minutious computings in regard to Eternity, Heaven, God. — *Then*, thy act will be something better than mere romantic infidelity, something deeper than mere fool-hardy sentimentality. — *Until then*, however, let us ponder what St. Paul has wisely and nobly said (Rom. III, 8): „let us not do evil that good may come.“

¹⁾ Crusius, *Moraltheologie*, Th. II, p. 106 ff. The allusion is, of course, to 1 Cor. III, 11 ff.

§. 9. The term Autocheiria.

The abstract word αὐτοχειρία, the personal noun being αὐτόχειρ, would seem to have been the most customary and distinctive ancient Greek designation for the act of self-slaughter.¹⁾ It is, at all events, the only one which, as a very felicitous linguistic composition, like many other Greek substantives which we have denizenized, because the genius of our language, such as it is, does not enable us to coin equally appropriate ones, many modern writers still sometimes adopt in the Latinized form autochiria. As little, however, as, when we say in English „he died by *his own hand*“, we mean to convey that the *hand* itself was employed as direct *instrument*, so little must our Greek χεῖρ be here understood in any but the *general* sense of strength, activity, violence, so that an αὐτόχειρ would mean anybody who acts *self-violently* so as to become the author of death to himself (or, to another person; for this latter reference, doubtless, our word likewise had), whether his hand be, or be not, employed as direct instrument. Indeed, inasmuch as the hand is the most proper and immediate organ of the human will, that medium through which the mind of man almost always principally and finally and most dexterously reveals its efficacy in reference either to external objects or to himself, the Germans significantly²⁾ denominate *every human action* a *Handlung*, i. e. „a work of the hand.“

However, the orator Aeschines, in the 4th cent. a. C., when endeavoring to depict and expose the injurious administration and the worthless character of his great opponent and rival, Demosthenes, whom he in vain strove to deprive of the golden crown which the citizens of Athens intended to bestow upon him, argues that one ought the rather to banish Demosthenes, „since it would otherwise be foolish to remove wood and stones and iron, things without voice and sense, if they, falling down, had killed anybody“, and then proceeds to inform us³⁾ that it was at that time in Athens the law and custom to hack off the hand of a suicide from the corpse, and

¹⁾ Other words, however, as we shall learn in the sequel, occasionally occur both for the action and the actor, e. g. ἐξαγωγή, ἀπαλλαγή s. ἀπάλλαξις, ἀποτομία, αὐθέντης s. αὐτοκτόνης, αὐτοφόντης s. φόντης ἑαυτοῦ, besides somewhat numerous verb-expressions. ²⁾ Vide Neuberth, *die Selbstthat der menschlichen Hand*, 1843, p. 30. ³⁾ Orat. adv. Ctesiphontem, Opera, edid. Reiske, p. 636.

to bury it separately, as a member which had, as it were, rendered itself specifically odious and guilty. A closer discussion of this law itself we reserve for §. 34, and here merely remark: firstly, suicide by means of a sword, dagger, or some similar weapon was evidently present to the eye of its framer, the more or less immediate instrumentality of the (right) hand being manifestly taken for granted; and, secondly, such a penal procedure must soon have acquired, as it were, a solely *symbolical*¹⁾ meaning, since other modes of suicide in which the hand could scarcely be presumed to have borne a direct part, e. g. self-drowning, self-starvation, self-precipitation from an eminence were anything but unusual in ancient Greece.

The matter standing thus, I should have spared the reader this somewhat gratuitous play with mere vocables, had a moment's indulgence in it not enabled me to pass on more conveniently to certain considerations which are important towards fully ascertaining and clearly fixing, preliminarily, the real nature of suicide. A double significant and even vital question, namely, thus not unreadily suggests itself to us: 1) Did, perchance, the classical Ancients find any *especial ignominy* in any *particular mode* of self-slaughter? And 2) does, really, any *greater* or *minor guilt* attach to any *particular mode* of self-slaughter?

I. There, doubtless, existed in classical, both Greek and Roman, Paganism a theory to the effect that *self-suspension* was an especially degrading, and, therefore, degraded, mode of suicide.

That drama of Euripides' which bears the title of „*Helene*“ is based upon the strangest of the multifarious and discrepant myths about the fate of her whose beauty was said to have been the cause of the Trojan war; for according to this myth, the Greeks had been fighting and suffering for her shadow-image only, her real self being all the time in the palace of the Egyptian monarch Proteus on the island of Pharos, after whose death his son Theoklymenos sought in vain to win her love and hand. Whilst, now, deploring her destiny and condition near the tomb of her deceased royal pro-

¹⁾ Similarly, for instance, up to a comparatively recent period the custom of backing off, prior to actual execution, the right hand of any grievous offender prevailed in christian countries, a practice which, I presume, was first introduced in reference to murderers, but subsequently became extended to any heavy criminal, e. g. to the traitor Struensee in Denmark as well as to the regicide Ankarström in Sweden.

tector and benefactor, Helen is approached by Teukros, the brother of Ajas Telamonius, who, being on his return from Troy, recounts to her everything that had befallen himself and his fellow-warriors. Deeply afflicted by what she has heard from him, and apprehending nothing but misery from the future, whether she should behold Greece again, or become the spouse of the hated Theoklymenos, she resolves to kill herself forthwith *somehow*. About doing the deed itself she has no scruples whatsoever; but the manner in which she ought to do it puzzles her considerably. Πῶς θάνομαι' ἂν οὖν καλῶς; Thus her self-proposed question to herself; and the reply which she makes to herself contains, whatever verbal difficulties there may be about minor points, more especially in the last line, reflections which are in substance to this effect: (self-)suspension aloft is indecorous (disgraceful) and is deemed unseemly even for slaves, whereas, on the contrary, in slaying one's self (with a sword) there is something courageous (noble) and beautiful, and death then appears in one brief moment (or, only a moment now remains for me to free myself from life, wherefore I must hasten to embrace the favourable opportunity).

ἀσχήμονες μὲν ἀγχόνας μετάρσοι,
καὶν τοῖσι δούλοις δυσπρεπέες νομίζεται,
σφαγαὶ δ' ἔχουσιν εὐγενές τι καὶ καλόν,
σμερὸν δ' ὅ καιρὸς ἄρτ' ἀπαλλάξαι βίου.¹⁾

Helene's thus uttered scorn of self-suspension seems all the stranger, since she has just before been led by Teukros to believe that her own royal mother, Leda, had *hanged* herself, and really believes it. Moreover, — and this is certainly still stranger —, we find our heroine herself subsequently in this very drama doubting, whether she should, in her own ease, give the preference to the rope, or, to the sword. Happy circumstances, however, in the sequel intervene, and prevent her from dying voluntarily at all.

According to this Euripidean testimony, then, in the age of our poet, i. e. towards the conclusion of the 5th cent. p. C., self-suspension would seem to have been deemed by the Greeks (at Athens) *dishonorable even for slaves*, unless we should incline to

¹⁾ Euripidis dramata, edid. Bothe, vol. II, p. 416, lines 269—272. For the other passages of this drama to which I shall refer vide lines 135 (and cf. 186, 187) and 316—320.

regard the above passage, firstly, as either a mere capricious and baseless hint which the poet gave on his own responsibility, or, secondly, as an interpolation arbitrarily made by some later transcriber, and, consequently, of no weight at all. Both of these points we will, accordingly, take into due consideration.

1. All the elder commentators of Euripides, e. g. H. Stephanus, receive the said passage in perfectly good faith, and illustrate it by simply referring us to what appeared to them a parallel passage in the *Odyssey* (Rhaps. XXII, 462, 463), which passage we must therefore more closely look into. When Odysseus had returned to Ithaka, he, after having shot down the troop of wanton and luxurious suitors one by one, the minstrel Faemios and the herald Medon excepted, gave orders that those twelve of the fifty women in his palace who, during his long absence, had behaved voluptuously and contemptuously, should be slain by the sword; but Telemachos so far disobeyed his father's commands as to cause them to be hanged, assigning for this measure of his as reason that they were too iniquitous to die the *pure death* (καθαρῶ θανάτῳ) by the sword. It is, therefore, clear that *being hanged* was in the Homeric age of Greece considered less honorable than being executed with the sword (the οἴκτιστα, however, in l. 472 refers, doubtless, only to the *suffering* supposed to be connected with suspension, not to the ignominy). Nevertheless, we must not forget that Odysseus' own mother, Antikleia, died by self-suspension, though certainly in the *Odyssey* itself (vide §. 17) the *mode* of her self-inflicted death is not specified, and the epithet λευγαλέος, which is applied to it, means simply violent, miserable, in opposition to natural, and is both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* applied also to death in battle, in the sea, etc.¹⁾ — Nor does, as far as I have been able to ascertain, any early commentator on Homer, e. g. the mediaeval Eusthatius,²⁾ or any later writer on Greek Antiquities, e. g. Potter,³⁾ shed any decisive light upon this somewhat obscure passage. The former says only: καθαρὸς μὲν ὁ διὰ ξίφους ἐδόκει θάνατος, μαρὸς δὲ ὁ ἀρχονμαῖος, consequently nothing but what must needs be taken for granted, if the Homeric lines at issue are to have any meaning at all, and the εδοκει, moreover, plainly shows that he himself was

¹⁾ Vide Rhaps. XXII, 443, 465—473, XI, XV, 359, and cf. also V, 312.

²⁾ As quoted in Clarke's edid. of Homer. ³⁾ Archaeologia Graeca, lib. I, c, 25.

not sure of his point, and at all events knew of no reason that could be assigned for it; the latter enumerates βρόχος as the second kind among the various modes of capital punishment inflicted upon criminals in ancient Greece, but, the only proof he has to offer of either its antiquity or its *marked ignominy* is the very *Odyssean* passage under discussion. Jacob Grimm, finally, endeavors (on p. 687 of his already quoted *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*) to establish by reference to the above passage in Homer that „es war gegen die Sitte des Alterthums, Frauen aufzuhängen, und wo für Männer diese Strafe ausgesprochen ist, wird für Frauen eine andere Todesart, verbrennen, ertränken, steinigen bestimmt“; but, since he gives no proof, such a mere unsubstantiated dictum of even such a man's no more removes the difficulty under debate than Eusthatus' paraphrastic conjecture did, or could. Indeed, it seems to me extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fix aught about the modes of capital punishment in ancient Greece, since they would appear to have been different in different States and at different periods, and not by any means always even different for different offences, nor can I at this moment find any historical warranty for assuming that actual suspension was ever in use, though strangulation in prison,¹⁾ doubtless, was, as well as e. g. flagellation, starvation, decapitation, precipitation, stoning, cudgelling, poisoning, crucifixion. Inasmuch, moreover, as von Homeric lines refer to *being* hanged, not to *self-suspension*, I may additionally venture to intimate a doubt, whether any inference from the judicial treatment of criminals be exactly conclusive in regard also to suicidal procedure. We know, for instance, that being hanged was a most ignominious mode of execution among the ancient Hebrews, be the cause for von²⁾ „he that is hanged is accursed of God“ what it may. Also, Philo Judaeus³⁾ places suspension in opposition to a pure death: ἐπ' ἀγχονην ἦξεν, ἵνα ὁ μαρὸς καὶ δυσκαθάρτος μὴδε καθαρῶ θανάτῳ τελευτήσῃ — θάνατον οὐ καθαρὸν τὸν δι' ἀγχονὸς ὑπομενοῦσιν. Yet, Achitophel, though a man of exalted station, hanged himself (vide §. 50), as did likewise Judas Iscariot (vide §. 64); and, though for sundry centuries

¹⁾ Likewise frequent among the Romans, vide e. g. Sallust's *Catiline*, c. 55, and Suetonius' *Tiberius*, c. 75. ²⁾ Deut. XXI, 22, 23, and cf. Numb. XXV, 4, Joshua VIII, 29, X, 26, 27. ³⁾ Paulus, *ergetisches Handbuch über die bei ersten Evangelien*, X. III, Hälfte 2, p. 611, who refers us to Philo's *de num. mut. T. I*, p. 587 and *de mundo*, T. II, p. 610.

hanging has been looked upon in England as the most degrading death to which the laws can condemn a person, self-suspension is very far from being considered among ourselves a more ignominious mode of self-despatchment than any other suicidal exit, and many of the so-called or really most respectable and refined male and female suicides both in earlier and modern times have given it the preference, when perfectly at liberty to choose from among many ways and means: nevertheless, I will in passing observe, if a prejudice against, or a superstitious abhorrence of, self-suspension really did exist in Christendom, we might, in some slight measure at least, account for it by bearing in remembrance the specific case of Judas, as, indeed, e. g. the churchfather Augustinus was somewhat fond ¹⁾ of emphatically stigmatizing suicides in general as „*condiscipuli Traditoris*.“

Returning, however, to ancient Greece, Heyne in his comments on a passage of Virgil (Aen. XII, 603) which will presently come before us, says of self-suspension: „*est enim hoc genus mortis heroicum ac tragicum, h. e. carminibus et tragoediis Graecorum frequentatum. Nobile adeo leti genus ex antiquo more, inprimis in feminis.*“ Nothing can be truer than this, and, without taxing our memory very heavily, we might easily add, were it worth while, half a dozen mythico-poetical examples to the already goodly list which that eminent scholar has on this occasion given. Moreover, whoever will be at the trouble of perusing more especially the dramas of Euripides himself in this respect, may quickly discover that he generally lets both his heroes and his heroines appear quite *indifferent*, whether they accomplish their suicide by the sword or by the rope! — Also antique anecdotal story is equally far from corroborating or countenancing the opinion above expressed by Helena. An instance or two at random. Plutarch tells us ²⁾ that Timon the misanthrope, an Athenian citizen in the 5th cent. a. C., on a certain occasion publicly addressed his fellow-citizens as follows. „People of Athens, I possess a small yard, in which a fig-tree stands, on which already many citizens have hanged themselves; and, as I have determined to build upon this spot, I wished to give public notice of my intention, in order that such as may haply

¹⁾ Vide e. g. lib. 2 contra litteras Petilian, c. 49. ²⁾ Life of Antonius, c. 71.

choose yet to hang themselves on this tree, may do so betimes, before it is cut down.“ And Diogenes Laërtius tells us¹⁾ of his celebrated namesake, Diogenes of Sinope, that, having once plucked a fig, the guard said to him „somebody hanged himself this morning on that tree“, whereto the Cynic replied: „well, then I purify it.“ Which same anecdotes, albeit worthless in every other particular, may at least tend to prove in some degree that in ancient Greece at about the time of Euripides self-suspension would not seem to have been exactly an unusual mode of self-destruction. No genuine historical examples out of that age are present to my recollection; but the following notice would seem to show that at all events in later ages self-suspension was just as little an uncommon manner of self-dispatchment at Athens. Plutarch, when speaking of Athens in the time of Themistokles,²⁾ and whilst describing the spot where the house of the victor of Salamis had stood, says of that quarter, Melite (on the north-side of the Acropolis?) „whither the executioners *now* are accustomed to cast the corpses of those executed, as well as the garments and ropes of those who have hanged or otherwise destroyed themselves.“

2. All this, now, rather tends to render the Euripidean passage under discussion utterly baseless and nonsensical; and indeed, though for altogether other reasons, viz. philological and aesthetical ones, a living German critic, Hartung, has been bold enough to pronounce the said passage *indubitably spurious*, taken out of some Comedy, and, perhaps, not without mutilation or omission:³⁾ on which same dictum we will, therefore, also dwell for a few moments.

Skipping over our four lines to l. 273 as containing Helene's reason for wishing to destroy herself, he conceives καλῶς θανεῖν to be a mere paraphrase of suicide κατ' ἐξοχὴν, his grounds being chiefly such as are contained in the following strictures of his. „Aber angenommen, daß hierüber gerade Helene eine andere Ansicht hegte und hier ausspräche, so müßte der Dichter wahnsinnig (sic!) sein, der sogleich einige Verse später darauf dieselbe Helene den Entschluß fassen läßt, sich entweder durch den Strick oder durch das Schwert zu entleiben. Ferner, wenn die Verse hier von unserem Dichter herrührten und dieser Stelle angehörten, so müßte nach der Bemerkung

¹⁾ Lib. VI. §. 6. ²⁾ Life of Themistokles, c. 22. ³⁾ Euripides' Helene, ii., 1851, pp. 203. 204 of the prüfende und erklärende Anmerkungen.

tung: das Erhängen ist unanständig, das Todtstechen aber ist adelig — doch nothwendig der deutlich ausgedrückte Entschluß folgen, durch das Schwert zu sterben, oder die Angabe des Grundes, weshalb Helene nicht länger leben könne.“ Leaving Hartung's purely grammatical and lexicographic strictures and proposals unmentioned, since we are here interested only in the substantial authenticity of our passage, I will venture upon the following six simple and brief counter-remarks to what has appeared to me acute and original, but too rash and positive, in his polemics on the four lines under discussion. a. Surely, Helene's own self-proposed question requires some reply; yet, the reply falls away entirely, if we strike out the four lines under debate. b. To deliberate upon the *mode* of self-slaughter was anything but foreign to the spirit and habits of classical antiquity, as we shall see by and by; and, indeed, nothing is more common with suicides in general, and especially, perhaps, female ones, than irresoluteness and wavering about the *means* they should employ for ridding themselves of a weary life. c. That καλῶς may be understood externally of the manner, and need not be restricted to the temper and mood (i. e. = courageously), can, I presume, scarcely be denied. d. Howsoever proverbially corrupt and defective the text of Euripides may be, the interpolation of our four lines from a comedy of some other writer's seems to me an over-daring conjecture. The case would be different, even if Hartung had supposed them to belong to some other drama of our poet's, to have been written on the margin as parallel passage, and to have subsequently got into the text by mistake; at least, something of this kind would appear occasionally to have proveably happened.¹⁾ e. The inconsistency which Hartung urges, and on account of which he so unceremoniously accuses Euripides of *madness*, would hold equally good of at least one other passage in our very drama (vide §. 13), according to which Helene says that Ajas Telamonius must have been *mad*, if he really fell upon his own sword, and yet she herself immediately afterwards contemplates doing the very same thing. f. Finally, we shall presently prove, without leaving any possibility of contradiction, that the *Romans* at least did consider

¹⁾ E. g. Donner in his Uebersetzung des Euripides, B. III, p. 304, draws attention to a case in which a line has crept into the Supplices from the Antiope.

self-suspension a specifically ignominious and undignified way of dispatching one's self, and, thence, since we shall also discover a sort of reason assigned by them, it is quite possible that also among some of the *early* Greeks a similar view or feeling once existed.

Clarke (in the already mentioned note of his edition of the *Odyssey*) likewise draws attention to a well-known line (lib. XII, 603) in Virgil's *Aenëis*, unfortunately, however, only on that principle which many of our Theologians adopt, when they in their so-called „marginal references“ in several of our editions of the Bible fancy that they have rendered a dark and doubtful passage in one Prophet or Apostle clear and certain by placing beside it some equally obscure and enigmatic passage from some other Prophet or Apostle. The said Virgilian line, namely, itself stands fully as much in need of elucidation and confirmation as the said Homeric line, and is, therefore, welcome to us only as a bridge across which we may pass on from the Greeks over to the Romans. Here, then, a careful discussion of the entire passage (599—604) to which it belongs.

The Italic Queen Amata, the spouse of Latinus, indulging in sentiments most contemptuous towards, and in endeavors most inimical against, Aeneas who had sought the hand of her daughter Lavinia, planned his destruction, but failed. Believing that Turnus, whose suit she had favored, and whose death she had declared herself determined not to survive, had been slain in battle, she forthwith *hanged herself*, and Virgil calls this death of hers „*informe letum*.“

„..... et, subito mentem turbata dolore,
Se causam clamat, crimenque, caputque malorum:
Multaque per maestum demens effata furorem,
Purpureos moritura manu discindit amictus,
Et nodum *informis leti* trabe nectit ab alta.
Quam cladem miseræ postquam adcepere Latinae“, etc.

The Roman critic and grammarian of the 4th cent. p. C., Servius, makes in his elaborate commentary on the *Aenëis* rather lengthy annotations on l. 603, from which we for our present purpose extract only the following few items, reserving the remainder of his communications — a somewhat odd jumble — for §. 35, where we shall likewise revert to sundry points in the words we will

now adduce.¹⁾ „Fabius Pictor (the oldest Latin historian, at the time of the second Punic war) dicit, quod Amata inedia se interemerit. Sane sciendum, quia cautum fuerat, in Pontificalibus libris, ut, qui laqueo vitam finisset, insepultus abjiceretur; unde bene ait, *informis lethi*, quasi mortis infamissimae.“ „Ergo, cum nihil sit hac morte deformius, Poëtam etiam pro reginae dignitate dixisse accipiamus.“ „Docet ergo Virgilius, secundum Varroem et Cassium, quia se laqueo induerat, letho perisse informi.“

Warburton²⁾ and Beloe,³⁾ now, have maintained that Virgil intended by the epithet under mention to *condemn morally suicide as such*, i. e. to express his positive abhorrence or disapprobation of all and any suicide. But, for our own part, we cannot for one single moment hesitate to reject such an assertion as groundless and silly, and to affirm that, on the contrary, only the mode under discussion is by the Roman poet thus branded. In addition to what is contained in the comments of Servius himself (vide the analysis in §. 35), the following reasons shall be left to speak for themselves. a. Virgil was *not* (vide §. 17) an anti-suicidal moralist. b. The adjective *informis* (cf. Dr. Freund's Latin Dict. s. v.) has not an ethical, but only, as it were, a physical or an aesthetical, signification (synonymous here with *turpe*, *foedum*, *infame*, as Heyne explains it in his comments on our passage). c. Servius himself interchanges it with *deformis*, the *primitive* and *predominant* meaning of which adjective is likewise physical and aesthetical, though it possess also derivatively a moral meaning. d. Tacitus who was an undoubted and enthusiastic laudator of suicide *per se* (vide §. 29), also applies the epithet *informis* to suicidal death in a *particular*, i. e. an *unnecessarily disfiguring*, manner, therefore, physically or aesthetically, not morally. Speaking of Sextus Papinius who had flung himself from an eminence and, consequently, dashed himself to pieces, he expressly says:⁴⁾ „*repentinum et informem exitum delegit*.“

Supposing, however, the epithet under mention to be by Virgil restricted to self-suspension, we can yet scarcely wonder that

¹⁾ Dr. Lion has edited the said *Commentarii*, Göttingen, 1826, and from his edition I shall quote here and in §§. 17, 35. ²⁾ Divine legation of Moses demonstrated, vol. I, p. 301. ³⁾ Translation of Aulus Gellius, vol. III, p. 158; note, where we read: „Virgil brands this crime, viz. suicide, with the epithet of *informe*.“ ⁴⁾ Ann. VI, c. 49 init.

Heyne (in his already mentioned notae ad Aen. XII, 603) should have expressed his astonishment at Virgil's having chosen to brand self-suspension as „lethum informe.“ „Sed infame hoc mortis genus poetam maluisse *mirum* videri debet. Scilicet nec hoc ad sui saeculi sensum attemperavit, nec ad nostram opinionem est dijudicandum; est enim“ (here follow the above quoted words of his). To which „*mirum*“ we will append the following two considerations as, at least, partially light-affording.

1. Upon the whole, I should incline to surmise that, as far as the Greeks and Romans really did object to self-suspension, their objection had its chief ground in what we would term their *sense of beauty*, i. e. such extreme love of the development and preservation of the Physical as we learn from their Gymnasiums and admire in their Statues. All of them cultivated the body along with the soul, and most of them the former far more than the latter; and regarding suicide, in general, not as a criminal or an unworthy act which could suggest any special concern about the fate of the soul, but rather as a justifiable and an honorable exit even for the best-educated and most refined, and committing it in calm and calmest self-possession, they, more especially the cultured and high-stationed among them, not unnaturally shrank on principle from needlessly causing their body to present such an absolutely terrible and loathsome spectacle as is produced by the distortion and discoloration which ensue upon strangulation. (Do not even our judicial authorities find it necessary or advisable to conceal the features of one hanged by means of a night-cap from the gallows-surrounding spectators?) Thence, the suicides among them generally either stabbed themselves, or, took poison, or, opened their veins, or, died of self-starvation; and, had fire-arms been known to them, we may presume that they would, on the same principle, have preferred shooting themselves through the heart to shattering their skull. — Suicides among ourselves, on the contrary, though they be not by any means always persons devoid of culture and taste, or such as have by wild passions and lowering vices destroyed in themselves all sense of decorum, are, speaking in general, either too anxiously concerned about the Yonder for the soul to bestow much thought upon the mere after-appearance of the body, or in so great a hurry to do their deadly work unchecked and unperceived that they seize upon whatsoever means or instruments are nearest, cheapest, most

convenient, it being comparatively or wholly indifferent to them, how mangled and disfigured soever their mortal frame may become, if but the spirit escape unhurt out of, or, be buried amid, the ruins of the broken tabernacle of the flesh.

2. Nevertheless, we certainly do find in the elder Pliny¹⁾ a mystico-psychological *reason* assigned for the belief in (Roman) classical antiquity that self-suspension was justly held in especial horror. Having designated it as „poena praepostera“, he proceeds: „*incluso spiritu cui quaereretur exitus.*“ (This philosopher, I may incidentally observe, tells us also that a certain Kremutius relates of a tree on which Phyllis had hanged herself, that it never becomes green;²⁾ and, that it was considered a sin to sacrifice to the Gods a vine on which anybody had hanged himself.³⁾ The more remarkable, therefore, it may seem that, according to him,⁴⁾ some of the ancient Romans appear to have ascribed a *salutary* medicinal efficacy to a rope with which any person had suspended himself.) Credulous and absurd, now, though the theory and supposition just mentioned must at first sight appear, yet the *possibility* of the existence thereof among the *people* not altogether unready suggests itself. — Doubts and difficulties have in all ages environed the question touching the nature, form, and seat of the soul, its time and mode of origin, the way and season of its outlet out of the body; but, its very name itself in almost all languages identifies it with the *breath*: cf. e. g. נֶפֶשׁ, and vide the mythico-philosophical account of the creation of man in Gen. II, 7; πνεύμα, spiritus, and cf. Horace's, Sat. II, 2, 79, expression „divinae particula aurae“; Geiſt = ghost, yeast, etc. Whence even now-a-days, if I mistake not, popular belief among Christians lets the soul depart at death out by the mouth: we read, for instance, in a satirical epitaph on Richelieu, composed in those days, „quand Armand vit le diable aussi près de sa couche, qui guettait son esprit *au sortir de la bouche.*“ The real point, therefore, of the medico-superstitious tenet assigned by Pliny is easily seen into, but, of course, need not be here seriously discussed; and I will merely make two simple remarks more. On the one hand, the said reason would naturally apply with equal force to self-suffocation, and, perhaps, even also

¹⁾ H. N. lib. II, c. 63, sect. 63. ²⁾ Lib. XVI, c. 26, sect. 45. ³⁾ Lib. XIV, c. 19, sect. 23. ⁴⁾ Lib. XXVIII, c. 4, sect. 12.

to self-drowning (two modes of self-destruction likewise not infrequent among the Greeks and Romans in both mythical and historical ages, as every student of classical mythology and history will without any aid of mine easily recollect). Indeed, when Valerius Maximus (vide §. 35) relates the self-suffocation of Macer in the age of Cicero, he uses the very words „*incluso spiritu poenam morte praecurrit*“, adds, however, subsequently „*inuitato fati genere*“, and we experience little difficulty in believing that few Romans at that time or of any other age had exactly recourse to stuffing a kerchief into their throat, as Macer did in the hour of his need. On the other hand, self-suspension may really have been held in a sort of superstitious horror by the Roman people in more ancient days, and have consequently been, comparatively speaking, only rarely resorted to in yon remoter periods. But, when we find e. g. the younger Seneca expressly writing ¹⁾ „*exeat, qua inpetum cepit; sive ferrum adpetit, sive laqueum, sive aliquam potionem venas occupantem, pergat, et vincula servitutis abruptat*“, we must experience some difficulty in believing that the same supposition would apply also to the later ages of the Republic and to the Imperial ages in which latter, as we know, both Seneca and the elder Pliny lived. The reader is referred for further proofs on this last assertion to some of the details in §. 35, when we come to speak of Roman legislation; and here I will merely add that, though, for instance, an ancient (but, *how* ancient — who can tell with aught resembling certainty?) Roman inscription has been discovered (at or near Sassina or Sarsina in the Ecclesiastical States) which evidently places the *self-suspended* on a par with hireling-gladiators etc., and excludes them from the usual honorable burial, I individually cannot bring myself to accord to such an isolated and merely local testimony anything like the weight or validity of an expression of a current moral sentiment or a prevalent legal institute. That inscription itself — with Orelli's ²⁾ explanatory clauses — runs thus. „*Baebius. Gemellus. Sassinus. Municipibus singuleis incoleisque loca sepulturae c. s. p. (centum sua pecunia) Dat. Extra (= exceptis) autorateis et qui sibi laqueo manus attulissent et quaei quaestum spurcum professi essent.*“

¹⁾ Epist. 70. ²⁾ Inscriptionum Latinarum selectarum collectio amplissima, edid. L. C. Orelli, T. II, p. 285, Nr. 4404.

We will now proceed to the second point above indicated.

II. Among some Christians in modern times the still stranger and more startling ethical theory has shaped and proclaimed itself that, properly speaking, *self-starvation* is not suicide at all.

Despite old Homer's letting (vide Odyss. XII, 342) Eurylochos emphatically declare that death by hunger is the most terrible of all deaths (λιμῷ δ' οἴκτιστον θανάειν), self-starvation would appear to have been a very common and rather favorite mode of self-destruction both in Greece and Rome; at least, most of the ancient writers ascribe this mode of exit to e. g. Lykurgos, Kleanthes, Anaxagoras, Isokrates, Antalkidas, Amphikrates, Atticus, Corellius Rufus, Silius Italicus, Cremutius Cordus, Demonax, Marcellinus, Agrippina, Julia Domna. Nay, we may in this connexion remember that the *very* title of Hegesias' famous pro-suicidal (now lost) monograph was ἀποκαρτερῶν, i. e. one who *starves himself to death*, „per inedia[m] a vita discedens“, as Cicero,¹⁾ renders it, and *correctly* I presume, though Suidas interprets²⁾ ἀποκαρτερήσαντα by ἐαυτὸν λιμῷ ἢ ἀγχόνῃ τὸν βίον ἐξαγαγόντα, and ἀπεκαρτέησε still more vaguely by ἐαυτὸν διαχρήσατο. About this notorious mediate disciple of Aristippos' in the 3rd cent. a. C. more in §§. 27 and 19; for the present, by way of elucidation, only what follows.³⁾ He must have been a teacher of some note in his day, since he had adherents who perpetuated his reputation by calling themselves Hegesiaci. One of his cognomina, ἀγρία μέλιττα, wild bee, which is said to have designated proverbially „a very dishonest and also cruel man“, would appear not to predicate aught favorable to his virtue or amiability; but, only another cognomen of his, viz. πεισιθάνατος, persuader to death, here properly concerns us, and it is affirmed to have originated thus: besides composing the above mentioned book the subject of which, according to Cicero, was „a certain person who is starving himself to death, and whose friends are endeavoring to dissuade (revocare) him, enumerates to them the miseries of life as being of such a nature as to render it not worth while to remain alive“, this philosopher was wont, in his oral discourses, to depict the sufferings of human life with such dark colors that followers and hearers of his were to such extent

¹⁾ T. Q. lib. I, c. 34. ²⁾ Lexicon, edid. Gaisford, T. I, pp. 480, 438, and vide also the note on p. 480, and what he says on p. 299 about Anaxagoras. ³⁾ Cf. e. g. Diog. Laert. in vita Aristippi, Val. Max. VIII, c. 9, 3, and Plutarch de amore proliis, §. 5.

thereby induced to shake off the burden of the body prematurely as to cause, it is said, the Egyptian king Ptolemy Philadelphus to exercise a counter-influence by interdiction and expulsion.

In the christian middle ages, however, self-starvation would appear to have been less frequently resorted to as a means of suicide. It is true, we find the churchfather Gregory of Nazianz already in the 4th cent. specifying γαστρός ἀνάγκη (same dura, as Billius *elegantly* renders it) among the ways in which the monks of his time occasionally destroyed themselves (vide §. 69), and considerably later on, e. g. in the 15th and 16th centuries, we find some few notable instances given, in histories or works of fiction, of this mode of self-destruction being had recourse to. I will remind the reader of Charles VII of France, because he feared being poisoned by his son;¹⁾ of the celebrated or notorious Italian philosopher Hieronymus Cardanus and his father, the latter anno 1524 after nine days' abstinence, the former anno 1576, because he had — for he was a sort of half-mad mathematician and astrologer — predicted the exact time of his own death, and would not have his prophecy belied;²⁾ of the lady of Fayel in the mediaeval novel; and, finally, of one of Cintio's stories in which, by the by, this Italian novelist of the 15th century expressly represents the widow Placida's in the Neapolitan city of Salerno starving herself to death as something altogether *unusual* and singular.³⁾

Also, in more and most modern times self-starvation has been much less frequently resorted to than, perhaps, any other manner of self-despatchment. Individual cases, e. g. Boissy, Johanna Naunton, Viterbi, I have read of; but, upon the whole, as far at all events as our own „most favored land“ is concerned, suicide by self-starvation is now-a-days a more rare occurrence than alas! death by *compulsory* and *inevitable* want of sustenance: in connexion with which sad phenomenon we who are so celebrated for our — in their way and season, no doubt, excellent and laudable — exertions in distributing Tracts, circulating Bibles, converting the Heathen, emancipating the Negroes, would do well to remind ourselves that „charity begins, at all events, at home“, though it need not end there,

¹⁾ At least vide Schmidt's Geschichte von Frankreich, B. II, p. 366. ²⁾ Vide his own outrageously frank autobiography „de vita propria“, passim, and Thomas' Historiarum sui temporis lib. 62. ad annum 1576, T. II, p. 266.
³⁾ Italiänischer Novellenschatz, ausgewählt und übersetzt von H. Keller, Th. II, p. 266.

that missions and emancipations ought to do the same, and that, without intending any depreciation to the gifted and genial authoress of „Uncle Tom's Cabin“, Caroline Chisholm, though a Catholic! should for the nonce at least stand far, far nearer British sympathy and its national and popular ovations. — — After which brief historical survey of the *practice*, we will go back to other points for consideration.

The younger Seneca did not deem it beside the duty, or beneath the dignity, of a moral philosopher to endeavor to fix by dint of a most careful exposition of advantages and disadvantages the *easiest* mode of self-destruction; ¹⁾ and, having given his verdict in favor of the opening of the veins, he, when Nero graciously left him a choice in the matter, acted up to his own theory. ²⁾ And, taking all in all, he would seem to have been in the right; for, if we peruse the story of his death and that of e. g. the death of the frivolous and infamous Petronius, ³⁾ we can scarcely help taking for granted that they died *easily*, sipping slowly at death's cup, and even collecting all their faculties to feel, as it were, at last the soul gradually relinquishing its hold upon the tottering tenement of the body. — Nor is it anything but natural and perfectly justifiable that a suicide should desire to die as easily as possible. One of young Hohenhausen's wildly mad exclamations was „ich habe einige Male den innern Wunsch gehabt, daß doch eine praktische Anleitung zum bequemen und sichern Selbstmorden existire“ (l. c. p. 194), and he, having contemplated water, steel and pistol as the means of his own voluntary exit, ultimately shot himself. — Aye, even poor Charlotte Stieglitz had, or sought to have, that part of the chest pointed out to her where the dagger might pierce at once the very heart's core.

Guided by some such view as this, I presume, it was that Meiners incidentally ⁴⁾ remarked that so slow and dreadfully painful a mode of suicide as self-starvation is, could never have become so usual a mode in classical antiquity, had not the warmth of the respective climates of Greece and Italy, probably, rendered the hunger-death less difficult and torturing than it is in more northern countries. It is true, reading the accounts of some of the deaths by self-starvation above alluded to, e. g. that of Corellius Rufus (Pliny, I,

¹⁾ Epist. 70 and de ira, lib. III, c. 15. ²⁾ Tacitus, Ann. XV, 61—64. ³⁾ Ibid. XVI, 19. ⁴⁾ Vide Plutarch's life of Antony, cc. 72, 80, 83. ⁵⁾ *Vermissene philosophische Schriften*, B. II, p. 216, Anm.

ep. 12) and Marcellinus (Seneca, ep. 77), it seems clear and certain that the suffering attendant upon them was far from being so intense or distressing as modern medical writers lead us to suppose generally connected with such a manner of dying, when they assure us that, ere death actually ensues, sufferings, increasing from lassitude, debility, swoonings even to convulsions, insanity, nay, fury, have to be endured. Whether, however, the mere climate make such a difference as Meiners imagines, only a physician could tell us, and he himself was merely a metaphysician. Much would needs depend on age, habits, constitution, and certain graduated modifications of the process adopted, and the time required; and I individually, speaking off the book, since I am completely ignorant of these matters, should incline to imagine that the *ultimate* suffering would be the same in southern and northern climates; moreover, I feel pretty certain that in modern times voluntary self-starvation is fully as rare a mode of suicide in Greece and Italy as it is in e. g. England and Germany. Therefore, what suggests itself to me and arrests my attention in connexion with self-starvation in classical antiquity is, firstly, the *calm deliberateness* necessarily attaching to this method of self-dispatchment, and, secondly, its *decorum*, its non-disfiguring, as far as the victim is concerned, and its non-alarms, as far as others are concerned, peculiarity.

Rochefaucault says in his low, but acute, *Reflections and Maxims* (s. v. Death). „Even suicides esteem death no small matter, and are as much startled at it, and decline it as much as other people, when it comes in any other shape than that which they have chosen.“ And, no doubt, in *individual* instances certain forms of self-destruction in a pre-eminent degree harmonize, so to speak, with the state of mind, or with the physical constitution, or with some particular association of ideas, or with the contagious influence of fashionable examples, so that simultaneously with the resolution to embrace death a decided choice of some definite mode is made, to the positive exclusion of all other means. But, if I mistake not, in the *generality* of cases those who are bent upon dying voluntarily are far more concerned about the certainty of the success of their attempt than about the means which they employ, so that the next surest means are the best, and, if one means do not succeed, some other is forthwith tried or thought of. For instance, Porcia is reported (Val. Max. IV, 6, 5, and Dio Cassius, 47, c. 49, but cf. Plutarch's life of Brutus, c. 53)

to have taken coals out of the fire; Cato said to his son, when the latter was anxious to withhold his sword from him „cannot I, then, hold back my breath, or run my head against the wall?“ (Plutarch's life of Cato, c. 59, and Appian, de bell. civil. II, c. 99); the effeminate and luxurious Cleopatra, besides experimenting with all imaginable poisons, attempted both self-starvation and stabbing herself (Plutarch's life of Antony, 72, 80, 83); Rhazis (vide §. 52) tried another means forthwith, after the first had proved unsuccessful; and on a recent occasion one of our countrymen (vide the Examiner, Aug. 13, 1853) took poison, cut his throat, and threw himself into a stream almost simultaneously, in order to render the issue perfectly sure.

Hohenhausen (ubi supra) wrote down in his Journal. „Who-soever destroys himself by passing a knife across the jugular vein or thrusting one into his heart, is the *real* slayer of himself, inasmuch as such a mode renders the action far more immediate, the knife becoming, as it were, in the hand a new member, and the blood streaming over into its pores!“ And, no doubt, certain forms of self-destruction imply, or appear to imply, 'a greater measure of stoutness of nerve, decision of character, and so-called courage than others; but, methinks, upon the whole whoso has vanquished the love of life were weak and foolish to heed over-much the mere mode of the last struggle with the last foe, and all we should incline to say is that the greatest wisdom is then manifested by selecting a means which destroys life almost instantaneously and leaves no possibility of rescue out of the clutches of death.

We found (p. 11 of §. 3) Blanco White writing to the effect that the „bodily suffering“ connected with every means of destroying the body is the natural provision to check the desire of destroying it. — But, surely, the mere *physical pain* attendant on a speedy means of self-slaughter need not be great, and is certainly anything but so great as that which accompanies various dental or surgical operations which are readily submitted to for the purpose of saving one's life. „Non dolet“, said yon Arria, when she summoned and incited her less resolute spouse, Caccina Paetus, to strike the deadly blow, and even many a female suicide, howsoever delicately framed and tenderly fashioned, has since then re-echoed yon „immortal voice“ (cf. Pliny, epp. III, 16). Nay, Schubert,¹⁾ when illustrating

¹⁾ Geschichte der Seele, p. 848 of the second edition.

the power of the soul over what is corporeal in man, and expressing his opinion that holding back one's breath proves such power most strongly, inasmuch as the want of air is incomparably more urgent than even that of food, winds up by saying „slaves of ancient Rome, as in modern times slaves from Angola, killed themselves by voluntary holding-back of the breath.“

But, whether the process of self-destruction adopted be quick or slow, immediate or gradual, the criminality of the act remains the same, if suicide as such be a crime; and, therefore, the more than Stoical persevering resistance to food and drink, *wilful self-starvation*, cannot but be just as much real and criminal suicide as is e. g. *lethal inebriation by charcoal-fumes*, this favorite modern French appliance. — Nevertheless, we meet with a different doctrine in e. g. Goethe's celebrated didactico-idyllic Novel.¹⁾ Two persons, Edward and Charlotte, both of them moving in the higher sphere of society, had in early years loved each other, but, compelled by their respective circumstances, had contracted each a matrimonial alliance with somebody else. Having, however, in the lapse of time become widowed, they met again, and married each other; but, living in retirement and affluence, they, anxious for more society, respectively invited the Captain, a friend of Edward's, and Otilie, a niece of Charlotte's, to come and reside under their hospitable roof for a longer or shorter period: the ultimate consequence of which arrangement was that Edward fell in love with Otilie, and Charlotte became enamoured of the Captain, each of them meeting with an equal amount of affection in return; and, despite all the peculiar contrivances which were had recourse to for the purpose of averting such a catastrophe, Edward and Charlotte mutually agreed to dissolve their union and to ally themselves in more congenial wedlock, he with Otilie, and she with the Captain. Nevertheless, Otilie, though she loved Edward devotedly, was resolved *not* to marry him. Indeed, by way of *atoning* for her share in the guilt, she not only expressed her determination to *drown* herself, which resolution by the by induces Goethe (Zb. II, c. 15 and c. 18) to designate her as „das herrliche Kind“, „das himmlische Kind“, etc., but, having

¹⁾ Die Wahlverwandtschaften, i. e. elective affinities: which peculiar, but graphic, title owes its origin to the circumstance that a chymical principle is therein applied to the moral world, i. e. „the boundness of the higher will of Man to the lower powers of Nature“ represented and — vindicated.

found it impossible to flee from or to avoid Edward, and having vowed to Charlotte that she would never even in the slightest degree encourage his suit, she subsequently secretly and gradually *starves herself to death*, relatively to which occurrence Goethe calls her expressly „eine Heilige“ (i. e. wie er, d. h. Eduard, in Gedanken an die Heilige, d. h. Ottilie, eingeschlafen war, so konnte man wohl ihn selig nennen), lets her be along with Edward *pompously* entombed, nay, allows her to be supposed to have become a *miracle-working* Saint, aye, especially claims our attention for that *friendly* moment, when she and Edward shall together awake unto Judgment.

Thus much about the plot of this, to my taste, tediously minute work in connexion with our topic. With whatever else we might incline to object to as *morally reprehensible* or aesthetically puerile in this our author's last great classical production we have not here to deal: literary historians may be thereon consulted among whom Vilmar¹⁾ has appeared to me to say briefly what *justly* can be said, and I have but little sympathy with opposite vindictory dicta, e. g. Schaefer's.²⁾ — Abiding by our theme, these *Wahlverwandtschaften* manifestly aim at the *transfiguration* of a certain form of suicide, i. e. self-starvation, *as though it were not suicide at all*; for Goethe carefully distinguishes between the mode of exit under mention and *Selbstmord*, calls it rather *Märtyrertum*, and employs a clergyman, Mittler — whose very name, by the by, is singularly appropriate to a representative of that class of men who cry „peace! peace! where there is no peace“, and where none can or ought to be —, to help Charlotte to understand and appreciate such distinction „aus sittlichen Gründen!!!“ (cf. the last chapter of the Novel).

The ethics here taught are not exactly quite original, howsoever absurd they may be, as I will now show by reference to one legal fixation and one historical incident.

Sir George Mackenzie found it necessary to state,³⁾ with reference to the very case of self-starvation, that suicide might be equally well a matter of „omission“ as one of „commission“, i. e. self-starvation is the omission of what fondness for life demands, the conditions of self-preservation require. We need not enter into the

²⁾ Geschichte der deutschen Nationallitteratur, B. II, p. 232 of edit. 4. ¹⁾ Goethe's Leben, B. II, p. 191. ³⁾ The laws and customs of Scotland in matters criminal, 1722, title XIII.

old dogmatic division of sins into those of commission and omission which would not, I presume, much better bear being most deeply scrutinized than yon other scholastic division of sins into mortal and venial ones (vide Sect. V). Much of what is radically erroneous or defective generally finds its way into suchlike definitions of the schools and their systems and catechisms, and one would be sometimes more or less puzzled to discover where exactly activity and passivity begin and end. What, however, Sir George here meant, is clear enough, and true enough too, as I take it.

I have already in an earlier § alluded to the impeached, imprisoned, and condemned Danish Minister of State, Count Struensee. Dr. Balthasar Münter, a learned and pious Copenhagen pastor, undertook to instruct the doomed culprit in the truths of the Christian religion, and subsequently published a detailed history of the Count's conversion, in which ¹⁾ we find Struensee after his conversion making the following confession to Münter. „I regard my death, and even everything terrible and ignominious therewith connected as things which God finds necessary for my welfare. At the commencement of my captivity I thought very differently about the matter, when it sometimes occurred to me that this issue of my cause would be the probable one. I wished that I might fall ill and die. I even had the thought of abstaining from eating, and thus starving myself to death; *yet, I never should have laid violent hands upon myself*, though I had had an opportunity for doing so. I thank God from my heart that neither the one nor the other thing has been done.“ Mark here the antithesis!

How such a notion could come to assume the semblance, at least, of a verity, is not altogether difficult to divine. Firstly, mere self-mortification which religion has often prescribed, or, mere abstemiousness which disease may enjoin, or poverty necessitate, or discipline inflict, or taste suggest, often border pretty closely upon self-starvation. Secondly, the step beyond mere temporary refusal of food seems at first so natural and innocent that even fretful, stubborn, chastised, unhappy children who have no clear notion of suicide, easily fall into the resolve to starve themselves out of their misery or their grief. Thirdly, there is about self-starvation something not only so relative and graduated, but also apparently so

¹⁾ *Bekehrungsgeschichte des Grafen Struensee*, 1772, pp. 271, 272.

passive that it seems rather *letting* than *making* one's self die, and, because, as it certainly does not require any deed of external violence, it seems not to imply any direct attack upon life. — Yet, howsoever gentle, decorous, silent and slow this same process of self-sought and self-wrought death may be, it is literally and emphatically still suicide; for, suicide is of the *will* and the *intent* and the *mind*, and mere external forms and measures do not by any means essentially affect moral realities. Nay, more than this. Speaking in general, the nature of any action whatsoever, whether good or evil, becomes only *intensified* in motive and purpose by premeditated continuity and methodical graduality, and, inasmuch as self-starvation cannot but lack even the pretext of momentary impulse or the plea of temporary insanity, it presents itself to us, if suicide as such be morally wrong, as even more reprehensible, because more deliberate and pertinacious, than a pistol-shot before the brow or a dagger-thrust into the heart. Consequently, if we, on the one hand, must seriously decline to allow ourselves, as even so great a moralist as de Wette ¹⁾ would fain suggest, „to be gladly deceived (täuschen) about the means which Ottilie chose“, and here to distinguish what he calls „*feine Selbsttödtung*“ from actual „*Selbstentlebung*“, we, on the other hand, cannot help dissenting from Krug's supposition ²⁾ that Goethe's assertion that voluntary self-starvation was not suicide had been „*vielleicht nur aus einem gewissen Sentimentalitätsfibel hingeworfen.*“ Goethe was no longer a youth, but a man of sixty, when he (1808 and 1809) wrote *die Wahlverwandtschaften*, and men at that time of life are generally beyond the affections of mere „*Sentimentalitätsfibel.*“ Moreover, he really entertained most seriously and sincerely somewhat strange views on more subjects than one (let us think, for instance, of his anti-Newtonian theory of colors and his imaginary discovery of the *Urpflanze*); and, finally, very many of his works testify pretty clearly that his views about suicide in general were anything but clear or correct, as we shall see in §. 21, when we come to speak of *die Leiden des jungen Werther*, wherefore it may suffice here to annotate that in this very Novel (vide the episode of *die wunderlichen Nachbarkinder*) he contents himself with characterizing the attempt at self-destruction

¹⁾ Vorlesungen über die Sittenlehre, Th. II, Bd. 2, pp. 318, 319. ²⁾ Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften nebst ihrer Literatur, B. III, pp. 710–716.

on the part of a maiden for the very mean, silly and godless purpose of being *avenged* upon a youth who, though dearer to her than the one she was actually betrothed to, happened not to be enamoured of her, as a mere „*seltsamer Wahnsinn*“; and that in his drama *Egmont* he lets the dying hero come in for a dream-vision in which the suicidal Clärchen is apotheosized into a glory-crowned messenger of Liberty.

„I'd apocartereaze a' thegither, after the manner o' the ancient philosophers. *But it's no' lawful, I misdoubt, to starve onesel.*“ Thus wise and stern old Sandie Mackaye ¹⁾ in such thoughtful manner and rough dialect as may fitly remind us of the inmost spirit of brave old Puritanism, instructed and genialized by modern progress and experience: and to this verdict from the lips of yon humble, but philanthropic, fictitious hero, not to Goethe's utterly untenable would-be speculative refinement, I cannot but most cordially subscribe.

§. 10. The relation of self-execution by command of the magistracy, and of death solicited from a fellow-being, to suicide.

We will now return to the etymological meaning of the term *autochiria*, and in connexion with it the two following cases further suggest themselves to us, and call for discussion.

A. Self-execution by command of the magistracy.

This is *externally* *autochiria*, though it lie *morally* altogether outside of the pale of suicide. Yet, how closely allied it seems to actual suicide, we may infer from what will come before us (vide §§. 24, 25) in Plato's *Phaedon* and *Leges*. Sokrates, whilst strenuously arguing against the lawfulness of suicide, draws into his elucidations the case at issue, but carefully distinguishes it from what he defined as veritable suicide, and emphatically pronounces compliance with the legal injunction of his Athenian judges divinely obligatory. Less wisely, and if it be not an error of judgment, yet it was, as I think, a defect in method on his part, Plato classes it under the head of veritable suicide, though he too, when purposing to denounce what he considered culpable suicide, expressly excepted self-execution by command of the magistracy.

¹⁾ Vide Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, vol. II, p. 179.

The existence and practice of such command by the „temporal powers that be“ we encounter in *non-christian* lands, classical, semi-civilized, and Muhammadan.

Every student of ancient Greek history will readily recall to memory the notable instances of Sokrates, Theramenes, Phokion and his fellow-patriots Nikokles, Thudippus, Hegemon and Philokles in the 4th cent. a. C. at Athens;¹⁾ and the readers of Tacitus, Dion Cassius and Suetonius, more especially about the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero and Domitian, will experience no difficulty in remembering the deaths of e. g. Seneca, Silanus, Macro, Mamerus Aemilius Scaurus, Petronius Turpilianus.²⁾

In ancient Aethiopia, the usual and legitimate mode of getting rid of condemned criminals would seem to have been the one under mention; for, the king was wont to send one of his servants with a death-warrant which the doomed culprit no sooner saw than he went home and killed himself; if he attempted to flee, such flight was considered by his nearest relatives a disgrace to themselves, and they forthwith slew him; nay, up to a late period, the Priests could issue such a mandate even to the King himself.³⁾ Similar instances occasionally occur in the history of Egypt,⁴⁾ that of ancient Persia,⁵⁾ that of China,⁶⁾ and that of ancient Peru.⁷⁾ But, most remarkable is the extent to which this legal procedure was, and still is, carried in Japan, where the Monarch is in the habit of sending to any one of his Magnates who should have chanced to offend him, a command to despatch himself, and where Delinquents consider the privilege of being allowed to become their own executioners a signal favor.⁸⁾ Everybody is, of course, aware of the Turkish Sultan's habit of transmitting a silken cord to the Vizier and other Dignitaries; and most of my readers may recollect that the Chiefs of the Assassins (vide §. 45) not unfrequently enjoined self-destruction on their de-

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Xenophon's H. G. II, 3, 56, and Plutarch's life of Phocion.
²⁾ Cf. e. g. Dio, lib. 58, 24, 59, 3, and Ernesti's note on „compulit“ in Suetonius' Caligula c. 23, with the references to Tib. c. 56 and Nero c. 35.
³⁾ Diod. Sik. lib. III, 5, 6, and lib. XX, 27. ⁴⁾ Plutarch in his *quomodo amicus* etc., §. 32. ⁵⁾ Herodot. lib. III, 15, 2. ⁶⁾ Gützlaff, as already quoted, vol. I, pp. 225, 235, 295, 314, 435, and vol. II, p. 33. ⁷⁾ Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, vol. I, p. 454. ⁸⁾ Vide what Coccejus communicates in his *Grotius Illustratus* (loco citato) from Gaspar Velela in *epp. Soc. Jesu de rebus Japan.* lib. II, p. 231; and cf. Section II.

pendents, albeit only by way of proving the unconditional authority they possessed over them.¹⁾

Were we to ask: *where* did the said magisterial custom first originate? — I know not, but should incline to seek its primitive source in Asia or north-eastern Africa, whence it might have made its way at an early period into Greece, and thence into Italy, already during the early ages of the Republic (isolated instances occur in Livy and the elder Pliny).

Into the penal usages of Christianity, however, as far as I am aware, nothing similar was ever adopted; and only analogous, not identical, is even the *lawless* occasional practice of Pirates or Mutineers to call upon their luckless and helpless victims to „walk the plank“, i. e. to step deliberately without further parley or delay into the deep, deep sea.

The curious in matters of this description might further ask: from what motive were or are those condemned to die commanded themselves to execute upon themselves the last sentence of the law, instead of, as our modern christian usage prescribes, being executed by others? — The very learned bishop of Gloucester very dogmatically instructs us (*ubi supra*, Book II, sect. 4) that we have to regard the custom under discussion as an intensification of *unfeelingness* or *cruelty* towards the victims. However, as we just now saw, it was in some countries at least meant and felt to be the very iopposite, viz. a favor and boon conferred; nor should I like to affirm that even in our own days christian criminals condemned to die would always consider a magisterial command or permission to put themselves to death as something added to the severity of capital punishment. Of course, much could not but depend upon the natural disposition and the nervous system of each individual, and, therefore, no universally valid statement can be made on so general a case. But, some few facts would seem to tend considerably to weaken the force of Warburton's dictum. For instance, how numerous are not in our own annals of crime instances of condemned malefactors (e. g. Sindercome, Campbell, Bolton, Wild, Price, Hackman, Barrington) who either committed or attempted suicide prior to the day of execution; and the daily Newspapers bid us notice what extreme

¹⁾ Cf. what Moore in his *Lalla Rookh* affirms of the disciples of Hakem ben Hashem.

precautions the authorities of public justice often find it necessary to take for the very purpose of preventing the inmates of the condemned cell from anticipating with their own hand the work of the lawful executioner. Consequently, it would appear that very many would, like Eugene Aram, prefer what he called a „decent and manly“ mode of death, i. e. self-slaughter, to an ignominious and a passive one, i. e. being hanged, or in some other manner put to death, by a public functionary of the law of the land. Nevertheless, I am not prepared to deny that, if self-execution were really the process of capital punishment constituted by our modern magistracies into the order of the day, many delinquents would in their own persons verify the proverbial perverse disinclination to submit to what is prescribed and commanded as they now verify the equally proverbial rebellious inclination to do what is proscribed and interdicted; and I need scarcely intimate that with some doomed criminals the love of life, or, the fear of death, is still so potent a principle and such a master-passion that quite as much actual violence would be required to force them into taking the last step of their own accord as is now occasionally required to „launch them into eternity“, and that even the physical feebleness, not to speak of their moral faint-heartedness, of others might often needlessly prolong or exacerbate their death-struggles.

But, be this as it may, I myself feel disposed to assume, that a species of kindness and favor was really intended to lie at the bottom of the said magisterially bidden self-execution; at least, this would seem to have been the case more especially at Athens, and in a measure likewise in Rome. Thence, whilst in the latter city the doomed victim was allowed to select the means of exit most suitable to his own predilections, the potion (xovvov) proffered by the Athenian State was, if we scrutinize e. g. the comparatively mild sufferings of the dying Sokrates, evidently a very gentle mode of execution. However, here I will annotate that Plato's (and mainly his) description of the apparently painless death of Sokrates has induced modern medical writers¹⁾ to discredit Pliny's statement that the draught offered to him was hemlock (cicuta, that species called *conium maculatum*) which, they affirm, produces much more varied, violent and agonizing symptoms and sufferings. But, also the cir-

¹⁾ Vide the article *Schierling* in *Brockhaus' Conversationslexicon*.

cumstance that e. g. on the isle of Keos and in the Greek colony Massilia, where the magistracy permitted suicide as a *boon* to certain persons (vide §. 34), hemlock (κωνιόν) was always resorted to, proves that it must have been the most easy means then known, i. e. a most painlessly and quickly effective poison, whatever herb it may have been, and whatever the ancient (now unknown, it would seem) mode of preparing it may have been, on which matter I take the liberty of referring those interested therein to such particulars as Bröndsted¹⁾ and Welcker²⁾ have taken the trouble to collect, since I shall revert to these respective interesting and instructive essays of theirs on a later occasion (§. 34).

By the by, a very different and *most strange* reason for causing criminals to be their own executioners I have read in old Montaigne.³⁾ „On dit que Witolde, Prince de Lithuanie, introduisit en cette Nation, que le Criminel condamné à mort, eust luy-mesme de sa main, à se defaire: *trouvant estrange, qu'un tiers, innocent de la faute, fust employé et chargé d'un homicide.*“ But, first of all, I have very considerable doubts about the fact itself. We learn from Voigt⁴⁾ that Witowd (Witold, Vitondus) was Grand-Duke of Lithuania in the 14th and 15th centuries († 1430) and „stood forth for more than half a century in the history of the North-Eastern peoples as one of the greatest and mightiest princes“; and we further learn from Cromer⁵⁾ that on one of Witowd's numerous compaigns, anno 1405, some of his subjects — the Lithuanians were a rude, warlike, and treacherous race, and at that time still Pagans, I believe, since Lithuania was that European land in which the sway of Idolatry was broken last — had by rapine and murder misbehaved themselves to such an extent as to incur his sore displeasure, whereupon he condemned two of the malefactors to hang themselves, the historian (Cromer) adding „patrio more“, and assuring his readers that they did so forthwith, lest something worse might be in store for them. This, and no more, stands in the edition of Cromer to which I have had access. On the motive ascribed by Montaigne, Cromer

¹⁾ Reisen und Untersuchungen in Griechenland u. s. w. in acht Bänden. Erstes Buch, 1826, p. 79, und Belfrage I, pp. 81, 86, 87, 97, 98. ²⁾ Rheinisches Museum, 1833, p. 614, Anm. ³⁾ Essais, liv. III, ch. 1. ⁴⁾ Geschichte Preussens, B. VII, p. 552. ⁵⁾ Polonia, sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum, 1580, lib. XVI, p. 269. Barbeyrac, in his notes on Pufendorf, lib. VIII, c. 4, §. 6, nr. 3, quotes p. 384 of an earlier edit. (1555) which I have not seen. Both P. and B. have adopted Montaigne's statement.

is altogether silent, and it probably originated simply in the circumstance that, as often, the naïve essayist's lively imagination played a prank upon his memory, of the unfaithfulness of which latter faculty he himself so frequently complains. — But, supposing for a moment Witowd really to have harboured *some such reason*? Let us make bold to comment on its extreme folly, not because any discussion of the isolated phenomenon as such can prove much to our taste, but only because a kindred principle obtrudes itself on manifold occasions.

An executioner is only a servant of the magistracy, and is as such irresponsible, because willless. If, therefore, by an execution homicide be committed, the law, the judge, not the headsman or hangman commits it. This is self-evident to everybody who thinks at all. But, nevertheless, public opinion attaches, generally speaking, something degrading and odious to the office and person of the final executive of penal legislature; and, no doubt, such opinion links itself to certain delicate and tender feelings which we cannot but applaud; but, at the same time, does it not betray a decided want of correct discernment? No office whatsoever, methinks, if pronounced lawful by the constitution of a land, rendered necessary by the claims of society, administered in a spirit of humaneness and with the requisite skilfulness, is a just subject for opprobrium or contempt. As long as christian communities adhere to the enforcement of capital punishment for specified offences, the said capital punishment, in whatsoever manner it take place, must be performed by somebody, and this somebody is therefore unquestionably a useful and necessary member of the body politic, the christian community. We may not exactly *envy* his vocation, — nor do we e. g. envy the sailors who in the navy are bound to string up their delinquent comrade, or the soldiers who are called out to shoot down the deserter, or drummers who must flay a fellow-hireling to death, or marksmen who are commanded to fire at midnight at the heart of a helpless Duc d'Enghien, or artillery-men who are bid to cannonade into the ice over which the defeated foe is retreating!! But, inasmuch as by far the greater number of us do not follow a calling of our own choosing, but rather one which e. g. the station into which we were born, the occupations of our parents, the pecuniary means we have to inherit or to forego, more or less accidentally force upon us, I for one have no notion of admitting that any mere profession or

trade as such sheds dishonor or honor on an individual, and incline to believe that, if the profession or trade be but in themselves legal and moral, any one of the many may afford equal dignity to the individual. Butchery in human flesh were to me just as little a pleasant or edifying employment as butchery in any other flesh; but, may not an executioner be a gentle-hearted, philanthropic, earnest, unspotted member of society as well as the presiding judge in a Criminal Court? Out upon our wretched *caste-system* in Christian lands, more especially, however, in our own, which, if we penetrate beneath the surface and into its deepest essence, and view it by daylight, is not over-much wiser or better than that of the Hindoos whom we quarrel with and would fain convert. When and where men and women will and must eat animal food, the butcher exercises an honorable profession; when and where men and women will and must wear shoes and boots, the maker thereof exercises an honorable profession; when and where children will and must be taught to read, spell, write and cast accounts, the village-schoolmaster exercises a profession quite as honorable as the village-parson who in his turn purveys to adults who will and must hear sermons; aye, and I do not scruple to affirm that the character and work, the life and death of very many a humble schoolmaster in our country seem to me to place him in *genuine christian respectability* infinitely higher than Bishop X Y Z of the diocese of A B C. How long more, alas! how long still shall we persevere in bowing down to and worshipping profession,s possessions, stations and ranks as such? Or, deny, if you dare that the disposition, the principles, the conduct, the inward and outward life of very many a Teacher and Governess, Tradesman and Shopkeeper place them before *God* immeasurably higher than the Rev. ..., Dr. ..., Merchant or Broker ..., the Right Reverend ..., and my Lord And, when our State-Church shall have become a People's Church, and our Clergymen shall have become thinking and meek men, we shall, perhaps, as a nation discover and confess that *Christian Socialism*, rightly apprehended, is anything but a Godless fallacy. — —

However, to return. As before said, wheresoever the authorities of public justice *enjoined* self-execution, it could, of course, not be regarded as a *suicidal* act; on the contrary, not to execute one's self, when the established and acknowledged laws commanded it, would be, palpably, in the same measure disobedience to them

in which self-execution would be, when they interdict it. Thence, for instance, the Muhammadans unhesitatingly comply with the Sultan-ic mandate I have previously specified, though they cherish a sincere and an extreme horror of suicide on Koranic grounds, and are anything but addicted to it, as we shall learn in Section III. — An altogether different question, however, would be this: is, then, any public magisterial body authorized to *command* self-execution? Methinks, supposing the person thus commanded to be a *malefactor*, and his life to have been *forfeited* to those existent laws of the country under which he has lived and to which he had sworn fealty, the life he still lives is, properly speaking, no longer his own property, but belongs rather to those very laws; and, it is a question of comparatively small moment *how*, i. e. through what particular instrumentality, it becomes taken away. If the State, whether Prince, Parliament, Senate, or Judge, have any right to decree *capital* punishment at all, it has, as I think, an undoubtable right also to prescribe the *mode* of such punishment, and we should have just cause to blame and condemn only then, if the mode prescribed were wantonly barbarous or needlessly tedious. My own individual impression, therefore, is, as I have already hinted, that in such a case the subject's duty would render obedience imperative upon, even though it should be repugnant to, the victim. — Nevertheless, it is perfectly clear that, since likewise the doomed malefactor remains a free agent in relation to the matter at issue, no law whatsoever *can* carry out such a decree, unless he himself become finally a consenting and abetting party to it; and, unquestionably, the more consistent and every way sensible procedure is to let the law *do* by its servants what it by its servants *pronounced*.

Supposing, on the other hand, the person thus commanded to be *guiltless*, the very issuing of the command is *judicial murder*, in the most literal sense of this term, yet, the compliance therewith, the act of self-execution in consequence of it, would most assuredly not to be suicide, as we have also already hinted. But, inasmuch as every social covenant, every politic compact is subject to, and limited by, moral conditions, it follows that law and jurisdiction terminate where injustice, caprice, tyranny commence, and nobody can be required to lend obedience to the prescriptions or injunctions of lawlessness and illegality, and much less to lend a helping hand to the fulfilment of their enactments. Thence, it cannot be other-

wise than right, just, wise, manful, heroic in such cases to disobey and to rebel, as far as power is within our reach, and to hope „even against hope“ that the great invisible power of justice and truth which the Believing call God, because it is of Good, will still appear and prevail and rescue self-conscious innocence out of the clutches of the „Powers that be“, but are — of Chaos, Guilt, and the Devil. — Nevertheless, if any individual can and will reconcile himself to becoming an irresponsible instrument in the victimization of his own temporal life under such fearful circumstances, — and many a one has done so —, we may call his insight imperfect, his yielding feeble, but there still remains a „sacred simplicity“ of self-devotedness which more than merely washes away every stain. There is hero-stuff which will not of its own accord bend, and must be broken by foreign strength; but, if he or she chance not to be made of suchlike hero-stuff, why should they not hie themselves away quickly on the easiest path left open to their choice? Suspense might only intensify suffering; delay might only exasperate the foe.

I have already stated that the penal polity of Christendom never commands a *criminal* who is condemned to death, to become his own executioner; consequently, if such a person destroy himself in prison, we cannot hesitate, in accordance with the premises we have laid down, to account him — a suicide. It is true, the said person may regard his life as already de jure lost to the State, his relations, dependents, friends, if he have any, and the possibility of any further active and direct usefulness on his part during such brief period of his forfeited life as is still allotted to him, has de facto diminished into all but nought. Nor will I intimate that he owes unto himself the longest possible term for the preparation of his soul for its yonderward flight — a consideration of this kind is entirely of his own peculiar province, and seems to me, as I stated in an earlier §, moreover somewhat debateable ground —; but, I do venture to urge what can scarcely be denied, that he owes to Society the appointed exemplary, as it is usually denominated, public atonement for his crime or crimes, according to the manner fixed by its special legal organization. One simple point, however, here somewhat naturally suggests itself. Inasmuch as it, undoubtedly, lies in the Spirit of our Religion that the Magistracy should „temper Justice with Mercy“, even opposite to the most Sinning, that Spirit is manifestly „grieved“, when by the menace

and expectation of a death either *brutally cruel* or *unwarrantably ignominious* the delinquent is, as it were, driven into despair and desperation. For instance, if Patkul had in his dungeon suicidally anticipated the absolutely fiendish tortures, by the inflicting of which Charles XII indelibly stigmatized his in sundry respects generous character, who would like to „cast the first stone“ upon him? Or, when, as a soldier and a nobleman instinctively shrinking from the death of a common felon on the gallows-tree, which a Haynau had caused to be erected, by the hangman's hand, Lewis Batthyány in the night previous to the fatal 6th of October, 1848, struck at his own throat with a dagger which his faithful and prideful spouse had secretly given to him at their farewell-interview: who would incline to visit such suicidal attempt heavily upon yon captive patriot and ruler? — We need not reply to this last question by poetic eulogies, as one of the many rather politically maddened than morally inspired minstrels of Young Germany (vide Schulte, *Gedächtnis*, p. 25) has done; but, we will lay our hands upon our own hearts, and — be silent.

B. Death solicited from a fellow-being.

This mode of dying has been termed by some writers „*autochiria passiva*“, by others „*indirect suicide*.“ However, the latter term is palpably far too general and vague, and the first one only apparently graphic, since *suffering* usually applies to what is against our will, and scarcely ever to what we ourselves request or command. We will, however, in this § occasionally use it for brevity's sake. But, about the mere *technical* epithet we will not detain the reader any longer, and, in a *moral* point of view, I can only subscribe to what Pufendorf¹⁾ has said about it in the three following sentences. „Id quoque heic observandum, ad rem nihil facere, propria quis manu cadat, an alios quovis modo adigat ad mortem sibi inferendam.“ „Nam qui mori heic et nunc non debuit, non excusatur, si alterius manibus in arcessenda morte usus fuerit; quippe cum ipse fecisse censeatur, quod quis per alium facit. Etsi qui manus suas huic ministerio commodavit, crimine se quoque adstringere possit.“ Which, being interpreted, meaneth that it is to all rational intents and purposes identical with *suicide proper*. — However, in an *historical* point of view, the phenomenon under mention

¹⁾ De Jure Naturae et Gentium, lib. II, c. 4, §. 19.

merits exemplification, and, in a *psychological* point of view, it deserves inspection.

Omitting the well-known very frequent occurrence that among the ancient Barbarians, Romans, and Jews whole troops of persons wishful for immediate death, more especially for the purpose of escaping captivity, were wont to kill one another by mutual consent and incitement (vide various examples on the pages of Dio Cassius, Tacitus, Diodorus Sikulus and Josephus), only the last survivor in such cases using his own hand against himself, I will select a few instances of individuals who got themselves slain by their armor-bearer, their slave, their dependent, or their friend.

In the Old Testament already we are introduced in this respect to Abimelech and Saul. On the twofold narrative about the manner of Abimelech's exit we shall comment in §. 50, and I will here merely in passing annotate what Winer (in his *biblische Realwörterbuch* s. v. Abimelech) draws attention to, viz. that throughout Antiquity it was considered disgraceful to perish by the hand of a *woman*. Thus, for instance, Sophokles¹⁾ lets Herakles lament to the following effect „a woman, a weak one, not endowed with the strength of a man, she alone has, without sword, dispatched me.“ Of considerably greater importance and interest is the death of the first King over Israel, about which likewise two differing statements are to be found in the Hebrew biblical documents, which matter, and much else, we shall more or less minutely discuss also in §. 50, wherefore we may here content ourselves with making mention of two points. Firstly. Calmet expressly assures us²⁾ that Rabbinism views Saul's death as really suicidal. „The Jews put Razis among their most illustrious Martyrs, and pretend to prove from this example, and from those of *Saul* and *Samson*, that in certain cases *self-murder* is not only allowed, but is laudable and meritorious.“ Secondly. That the shield-bearer would neither slay nor survive his King and Captain, nor himself risk being made a prisoner of by the Philistines, is natural enough; but, whether David's execution of the Amalekite was considerate and generous, if we weigh the notions prevalent in that age, we shall enquire in §. 50.

¹⁾ Trach. 1039—1041. ²⁾ Dictionary of the Bible in the English translation s. vv. Razis, Samson, Saul, Achitophel, to which respective articles reference will be made in the sequel.

Not a little remarkable, however, it has appeared to me that the Septuaginta found in the Book of Job already a declaration of the impiety of autochiria passiva; indeed, this matter is curious enough to deserve being looked into for a few moments. The passage is ch. XXX, verse 24 which (I use Tischendorf's edition) they have rendered thus: εἰ γὰρ ὄφελον δύναμιν ἑμαυτὸν χειρώσασθαι, ἢ δεηθεῖς γε ἑτέρου καὶ ποιήσει μοι τοῦτο. Commenting on it, the mediaeval Greek monk Olympiodor (vide p. 459 of the Catena of Nicetas about which we shall speak in §. 72) says what follows. „Quare libenter, nullâ interpositâ morâ, vel ipse manum mihi injiciens, si illud sine peccato liceret, vel alium ad caedem meam precibus sollicitans, calamitatibus me eriperem. Atque utinam hoc mihi liceret, utique sane fecissem; nunc autem non possum, vetitum enim est, ne quis sibi mortem consciscat. Vides illud, *Possem*, non propter imbecillitatem, sed propter prohibitionem, ab eo dici; nefas enim et scelestum est, vitam sibi eripere. Ex his igitur plagae simul gravitas ostendebatur, et cauta ac provida circumspectio, ne sibi insidias strueret, observabatur: qui enim mortem violentam sibi inferunt, tanquam homicidii rei censendi sunt.“ However, does this verse really convey aught to the effect that Job wishes he might lay hands upon himself, or, at least, *request some other person to dispatch him*? The Hebrew words, which are indubitably very obscure and debateable, and of which our authorized version „Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction“ is to me at least all but unintelligible, and seems next to utterly senseless, run thus: אֵין לֹא-בָעִי יִשְׁלַחַךְ אֶם-בִּפְדֹּו לָהֶן שָׁעִי. The best modern commentators (about the position of the book of Job in general to suicide, and about the peculiar relation of the LXX to the Hebrew original vide §. 49) are in doubt about almost every word, e. g. whether בָּעִי should be taken as two words or as one, whether לָהֶן should be regarded pronominally (= they) or adverbially (= therefore), what is the exact meaning of שָׁעִי, if taken alone, and of יִשְׁלַחַךְ, etc. etc.; nay, indeed, whether the entire verse be intensely ironical, or, expressive of a return of the love of life, or, an exclamation of a sort of resigning despondency. We thus gain e. g. mainly the three following interpretations. „Only let God leave my corpse at rest, when I am once gone! or, must the departed even after their death cry?“ — „But, when falling, does not anybody lift up, or stretch out, his hand to save himself, and when

perishing, or about to perish, does not one complain thereof, or, cry for help?" — „But, no imploring, or prayer, avails, when God stretches out his hand, and, when God's visitation comes, is imploring thereabout to any purpose, or admissible?" — At all events, the translation given by the LXX would seem to me a sheerly impossible one, and would appear to me to have been based upon some altogether different reading of our passage, or, to be a strange exemplification of gross, wilful or involuntary, misconception.

As regards Roman story, the matter at issue enacts a somewhat significant part in the later days of the Republic and during the reigns of the early Caesars. Let us remember, for instance, Cajus Gracchus and Philokrates or Euporus, Cajus Cassius and Pindarus, Marcus Junius Brutus and Straton, Marcus Antonius and Rhamnus and Eros, the deaths of the generals Publius and Censorinus in the Parthian war of Marcus Crassus, and the circumstances attending the deaths of Nero and Otho.

The moralizing anecdotal Roman writer Valerius Maximus (libro citato) considers such a mode of calling in foreign aid a proof of dastardly irresoluteness, a process originating in a species of fear of death which still lingers in the soul, a kind of ignominious cowardice or Nemesis-wrought weakness. However, we'll let him speak for himself on two separate occasions. After having narrated that Cajus Gracchus was at his own request stabbed by his slave Philokrates, who immediately afterwards dispatched himself, he remarks „if the nobly-born youth had himself possessed sufficient presence of mind, he would have escaped from impending misfortune by his own hand, not by that of a slave, whereas now the corpse of Philokrates is an object of greater esteem than his own.“ And, still more strongly, when recounting the death of Cajus Cassius whom his freedman Pindarus had slain at his imploring request. „What God wreaked vengeance on Cassius for his monstrous misdeed (viz. the assassination of Cesar) and deprived his arm which had been lifted up to assassinate the Father of the Fatherland, of strength and life so that he tremulously embraced the knees of Pindarus that he might not receive his merited punishment by the sentence of the just conqueror for the parricide committed against the State? It was thou, O Divine Julius, whose sacred wounds demanded an appropriate vengeance! Thou hast ordained that this faithless soul was compelled humbly to implore a common man for succor; thou

hast deranged his mind to such a degree that he was not able to live, but likewise did not dare to end his life with his own hand.“ — The Roman historian Florus, on the contrary, whilst speaking of Cassius and Brutus, the latter of which was dispatched by his friend Straton, has a species of mystic reverence for the circumstance that neither of those two „last Romans“ imbrued his *own* hands in his own blood. I will quote what he says ¹⁾ in the original, because a passing remark on one word in the passage will urge itself upon us on a later occasion (vide §. 37). „Quis sapientissimos viros non miretur ad ultimum non suis manibus usos? nisi si hoc quoque ex persuasione defuit, ne violarent manus, sed in abolitione sanctissimarum piissimarumque animarum iudicio suo, scelere alieno, uterentur.“ — Neither Valerius Maximus (vide §. 33. s. nr. V) nor Florus (vide §. 37 s. v. Persians) disapproved of suicide in and by itself, but quite the contrary, and their antagonistic verdicts on this same autochiria passiva must, I presume, be in a great measure accounted for by their respective feelings towards the actors themselves. Valerius manifestly hated Cassius, or, at all events, disapproved of the assassination of Caesar, whereas Florus, who has lib. IV, c. 2 pronounced a beautifully affectionate eulogy on Cato's death, would seem to have been specifically adverse to the murdered Usurper, and, consequently, very favorably disposed towards his murderers. — To me individually it would seem somewhat gratuitous to accuse a Cajus Gracchus, who really had previously wished to stab himself, but had been prevented by his friends Pompejus and Licinnius, ²⁾ or a Cajus Cassius of cowardice, and their exact motive for employing the hand of a third party must, since we cannot pretend in the least to be able to see into their souls, be left to the reader's own surmisings; but doubtless, the most natural supposition would be this: having destined themselves for death, they might have apprehended uselessly heightened and lengthened suffering from a wound inflicted by their own tremulously insecure or weaker hand; at least, I can scarcely imagine that such men as they feared — which was, no doubt, e. g. the Emperor Nero's motive — that, if left to their own resources alone, anguished nature would make an effort to avert the final issue, and thus the intended deed be stopped short of a successful termination. Of course,

¹⁾ Epitome, lib. IV, §. 7. ²⁾ Vide Plutarch's life of Cajus Gracchus, c. 16.

if, as in the case of Publius, the right hand was already disabled by a wound received, the reason for such a procedure is clear enough.

Generally speaking, the Romans selected for this last office one of their freedmen (e. g. Pindarus, Rhamnus), or, one of their faithful slaves (e. g. Eros), or, also a friend (e. g. Straton), and there can be no doubt about the fact (vide Valerius Maximus and Plutarch) that the Romans of those days regarded the performance of such a last service as a signal proof of *fidelity* or friendship. Often, however, the person called upon preferred, from a sort of easily imagined grief and repugnance, slaying himself, e. g. Antony's Eros, and they almost invariably slew themselves immediately afterwards, e. g. Philokrates (and Pindarus?); if, however, they survived, it seems certain that they were *not punished*, but rather honored, e. g. Straton. However, this is a somewhat obscure point historically, and not by any means an easy one to reason upon philosophically. Therefore, here some few hints may be welcome to the general reader.

On the retreat out of the disastrous Parthian war, Mark Antony made one of his freedmen who served him as body-guard, Rhamnus, swear that he would stab him and cut off his head, whensoever he should command him, that he might neither fall alive into the hands of the enemy, nor be recognized by them when dead (vide Plutarch's life of Antony, c. 48). If, now, such a demand might be legally made, one who complied therewith could scarcely be penally dealt with. The State had not promulgated any law on the matter, and the will of the Master was law unto the slave at all events, and, in a measure, still to the freedman. If, on the one hand, we must pronounce such a demand inconsiderate, unkind, selfish, and even cruel and unjust, since it, as we have seen, generally involved also the suicide both of him who would not comply and of him who had complied, and since, as matter of course, such a subordinate or dependent could not be supposed to possess any power towards turning the bidder's or requester's purpose aside: we cannot, on the other hand, but wonder at the apparently absolute passivity of Roman legislation on this matter after it had become a rather frequent phenomenon, i. e. in the first century a. C. and in the first century p. C. At least, how easily might not a slave have murdered his master of his own accord, and then have asserted that he had done so at his master's explicit request or

express command? And, how difficult might it not have been to disprove such an assertion in an age when the upper classes of the Romans had learnt what Silius Italicus prescribes „disce mori“ far better than they had learnt the harder lesson how to live aright? And, yet how dangerous was it not to give ready credence, inasmuch as ¹⁾ slaves, individually and collectively, have ever and anon, both in ancient and in modern times, been wont to teach, not by lengthy arguments or eloquent phrases, but rather by such strength of arm and fiendish cunning as toil and oppression have dowered them with, that murderous wrath and murderous trick are apt to become, when provocation is more than ordinarily exciting and opportunity more than ordinarily favorable, such unjustifiable effects as spring from unjustified bondage? Nevertheless, such absolute passivity would seem to have existed anyhow up to the time of Domitian; for, Suetonius informs us ²⁾ as of a *novelty* and a *tyrannical caprice* that this Emperor, in order to deter the servants of his Court from laying hands on their respective masters, condemned Nero's private secretary, Epaphroditus, to death, because he, as it was believed, had aided the forsaken Nero in his self-dispatchment. Whether Domitian's immediate successors ignored this procedure as a mere exceptional case, I am unable to say. However, in the instances I have previously specified, supposing bondaman or freeman to have survived his master or friend, the deceased was generally well known to have been so circumstanced and mooded as to render a voluntary death on his part probable or notorious, and then it stands to reason that e. g. the deceased's relatives would reverence his memory too much to bring a public or private accusation against any person who had merely acted in consonance with his wish and will. I am perfectly well aware that e. g. Ulpian utters as axiom „volenti non fit injuria“, i. e. who himself possesses a right, relinquishes that right — from which same axiom more especially, received as it has been into the corpus juris civilis, ³⁾ many modern jurisconsults have boldly inferred, and attempted to demonstrate with much learning and acuteness, that, according to Roman law in general, volition on the part of the person killed absolved the

¹⁾ Vide e. g. the terrible narrative of the time of Marius in Plutarch's life of Sertorius, c. 5 in finc. ²⁾ Life of Domitian, c. 15. ³⁾ Lex 1, §. 5. D. de injur. (47, 10): „nulla injuria est, quae in volentem fiat.“

killer from all guilt, inasmuch as such volition, whether manifested as command or request, completely removed the criminal element from homicide. Of the much that has been written on this matter I have read more than I could fully comprehend, and, as it seemed to me, more than some of the writers themselves clearly understood.¹⁾ As far as I can discern, there is no ground for assuming that Ulpian meant the above axiom to extend and apply to *homicide*, and, if he did so, one may, I should think, pretty safely say that he was in the wrong, supposing the person who acts as homicidal instrument to be a *free* man, i. e. one in the eye of the State independent of the will of any individual who might choose to call upon him for such a service. Indeed, Rein asserts right out, without, however, giving passages in proof, that, if in such a case as the one just alluded to a legal inquiry was desired and demanded, the judge was obliged to punish the action as „*res mali exempli*“, or, to appeal to the Caesar for a decision on the matter.

Under the sway of Christianity, instances of *autochiria passiva* became more isolated, but yet cannot be said to have remained very rare. Some few more or less striking ones I will now record.

In the first quarter of the 5th century, Nunechia, the wife of Count Gerontius, conjured her husband who had revolted and was surrounded by the enemy, not to abandon her to a life of misery and disgrace, at the same moment eagerly presenting her neck to his sword. The count immediately fulfilled her request, and then stabbed himself. The *ecclesiastical* historian Zozomenus who tells this story,²⁾ adds the following comment: „thus died one who manifested a degree of courage *worthy* of her religion; for she was a Christian: and her death deserves to be held in remembrance.“ At which same laudatory verdict even Gibbon³⁾ was very naturally surprised, though, of course, not shocked.

Anno 1250, Queen Margaretha, the consort of the sainted Louis IX of France, whilst tarrying at Damietta during her royal husband's crusade, after she had heard of his captivity and when she was hourly expecting the birth of a child, one day suddenly

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Hepp's lengthy and learned treatise in B. XI of the *neues Archiv des Criminalrechts*, 1830; Abegg's *Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der Strafrechtswissenschaft*, p. 69 ff.; and Rein's *das Criminalrecht der Römer von Romulus bis Justinianus*, 1844, pp. 133—135, and p. XI of the Preface. ²⁾ Hist. Eccl. lib. IX, c. 13. ³⁾ Decline and Fall, ch. 31, note 151.

dismissed her retinue out of her chamber, arose from her couch, and, kneeling before an aged knight who used to sit at her bedside and endeavor to comfort her, requested a favor of him. The knight having with a vow promised to fulfil her request, she said: „I demand from you by virtue of the fidelity you have sworn to me that, in case the Saracens should conquer this town, you will slay me, ere it get into their power“ (*que vous me couppez la teste avant qu'ilz me puissent prandre*). And he replied: „be sure that I shall gladly (*trez-volentiers*) do so; for I had long since resolved to slay you, before we should be made prisoners.“ The sequel of events, however, rendered the execution of such a measure on the knight's part unnecessary, inasmuch as the Queen and her suite were allowed to embark prior to the entrance of the Saracen victors into Damietta.¹⁾

A couple of centuries later, anno 1453, when the Turks had successfully stormed his capital, Palaeologus, the last Emperor of the Byzantine realm, was heard to exclaim mournfully, whether there could not be found any Christian who would cut off his head, lest he might fall alive into the hands of the infidels. This account is given by a certain Leonardus, as the French bishop and chronicler Spondanus²⁾ informs us who (Spondanus) thereon remarks: „*potius hoc dictum putamus ad suos in hostes animandos tanti periculi objectu, aut denique ex animi in tali rerum confusione perturbatione; quam ut manus sibi ipse inferre, uti Sabellicus (3 dec. 7) interpretatur — cogitaverit*“, and then proceeds to assign with some degree of minuteness the reasons he himself has for believing that the said Emperor's soul has after all been, in truly orthodox and christian fashion, saved. Me the whole matter strongly reminds of the death of Saul and the Rabbinical disputes about his ultimate salvation; and, at all events, Spondanus' anxiety to absolve the said demand from „the guilt of suicide“ proves that he considered autochiria passiva as much a sin as autochiria activa. What, on the contrary, old Joinville thought of Queen Margaret's request, he has not told us; methinks, however, it scarcely appeared culpable

¹⁾ Mémoires du sire de Joinville ou Histoire de Saint Louis IX., T. II, p. 40, of the edit. London 1785. Vide also Wilken's *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten*, T. VII, Abth. I, pp. 243 and 245. ²⁾ *Annalium Ecclesiasticorum Baronii continuatio*, 1678, T. II, p. 27 ad annum 1453, X. Cf. also Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. 68, note 60.

to him, since he on another occasion (l. c. p. 37) tells us with all possible naïveté of Jacques de Chastel, bishop of Soissons, that he, seeing that the host were returning to Damiette and thence to France, preferred dwelling with God, and rushed quite alone among the Saracens who „tantoust l'envoierent a Dieu, et le misdrent en la compaignie des Martyrs. Car ilz le tuerent en peu d'eure.“

Passing on to modern times, I will first of all recount with scrupulous minuteness an occurrence which has been frequently more or less mis-represented, and to which we shall have to revert, for a literary purpose, in §. 59.

Heinrich von Kleist, renowned in the literature of Germany both as dramatist and novelist, was an extremely gifted and amiable man, but to a dangerous and painful extent dreamy and fantastic, in his inward and outward life unsatisfied and unsettled. This much quite in general.

It is said that he and a cousin of his, who had been educated together with him, at one period of their youthful lives promised each other in writing to die sooner or later each by his own hand.¹⁾ (Also the cousin, I may state incidentally, kept his promise.) Nevertheless, when at a subsequent period one of Kleist's most intimate and cherished friends had attempted to shoot himself, our poet addressed to him a beautiful and an impressive letter — now no longer extant — in which he pronounced such a deed sinful and cowardly. At a still later period, however, death-thoughts begin to find a way into various epistles of his, and already 1801 we find him discussing with two of his friends the most certain manner of ensuring success to an attack upon one's own life. But anno 1809 we again hear him declaring to another friend quite vehemently that „a suicide appeared to him just like a spiteful child who, because its parent would not give it what it desired, runs out of the room and slams the door behind it.“ I am unable to state with any satisfactory degree of certainty, whether, previously to the year 1811, he had for some time been determined, partly from disappointment in his literary career and partly from actual pecuniary want, to destroy himself, and had, only dreading to die without a companion in his deed, really endeavored to induce e. g. the author

¹⁾ For the following facts vide *Heinrich von Kleist's Leben und Briefe*, herausgegeben von Eduard von Bülow, 1848, pp. 6, 12, 49, 53, 57, 72—81, and 274, 275.

of the sweet Undine to join him in a suicidal death; but what I am now about to relate is certain.

During the last few years of his life in Berlin, Kleist had become acquainted and intimate with a married lady, Adolphe Henriette Vogel, who is described as being considerably gifted, more especially in regard to music, but of a melancholy turn of mind, dissatisfied with her own performances, unhappy in her social relationships, and, additionally, laboring under some, whether veritably or imaginarily, incurable and lingering physical ailment. The reciprocal friendship and affection between Kleist and herself is confidently affirmed to have been, in a moral point of view, beyond suspicion; — and why should we, as many have inclined to do, attempt to darken by gratuitous aspersions the sufficiently sad and sinful issue to which both of them were now hastening? — Kleist had once promised to her that, in case she should ever request any particular service of friendship, even the greatest, at his hands, he would perform it; and on one occasion, when he had casually made some sportive allusion to shooting one's self, she suddenly reminded him of yon earlier promise and asked him, whether, still remembering it, he were willing to abide by it? He replied in the affirmative, whereupon she rejoined: „well then, kill me! My sufferings have reached such a height that I can no longer bear life. It is, to be sure, not likely that you will do so, since there are no *men* more on earth; but“ Kleist, stopping her short, said: „I will do it; I am a man who keeps his word.“ —

On the 20th of Nov. 1811, they repaired together from Berlin to Potsdam, spent the night at an Inn in writing a joint-farewell-letter to a female friend of theirs at Vienna, a madly sprightly, fantastic, sentimentally mystic epistle, — for it has been published —, and at four o'clock on the following afternoon in a neighbouring wood Kleist shot Henriette with one pistol through the heart, and discharged a second pistol into his own mouth. He was at that time in the 35th year of his age. Both of them seem to have expired instantaneously.

Kleist's death, of course, rendered all *judicial* proceedings against him impossible. I will, therefore, before attempting to answer the question about his action in its *ethical* bearings, introduce to the reader the substance of a *real trial* which took place in France anno 1827, and which Hepp (*vide* pp. 287, 288 of the

already quoted treatise) has communicated from the Gazette des Tribunaux of that year (months Sept. 19, Oct. 24, Nov. 17) for the instruction of the legal public in Germany.

Lefloch was placed at the bar, and accused of having shot with a carabine Lieutenant Schmettau at the *urgent solicitation* of the deceased, and against the payment of a fixed *sum of money*. It was certain that Schmettau had entertained the design of suicide, and a little girl, thirteen years of age, who was the chief witness on the trial, declared that she had seen Lefloch, armed with a gun, accompany Schmettau to the very spot where the corpse had subsequently been found, and how Schmettau had seated and unrobed himself, and that she, after having been compelled by Lefloch's wife to go away, had immediately afterwards heard the report of fire-arms. The accused, on the contrary, maintained that he had only followed Schmettau at a distance, and had himself witnessed the latter shooting himself by placing the muzzle of the gun to his right ear and firing it off by means of the ram-rod. The physicians themselves were not unanimous in their replies to the question, whether the deceased might or might not have killed himself. The President, after having placed the case before the Jury (the Assizes held at Quimper, Oct. 12 and 13), charged them to the effect that, if they were perplexed, they had only to find that „the accused was guilty of *murder at the request* of the deceased“, a remark against which the Advocate forthwith protested as calculated to mislead the Jury, which, however, on its part declared after ten minutes' consultation that „the accused was guilty of *voluntary homicide at the request* of the deceased, and had committed the crime *with premeditation*.“ — In consequence of which verdict, Lefloch was condemned to death; the President, when pronouncing the sentence, declared that the words which the Jury had added did not in any wise alter the case; and the Court of Cassation declined to annul the sentence, albeit the Code Pénal de France, like most other modern systems of criminal jurisprudence, does *not* contain distinct prescriptions on the subject.

This last-mentioned circumstance may, perhaps, be regarded as a defect; but yet, Laws can scarcely be expected (we have seen that the Roman laws had not foreseen and, therefore, not codified the case at issue) to specify every possible delinquency; they can only include, as it were, spiritually every phase of crime. Can we,

then, be reasonably either surprised or shocked at the sentence of the French Court on the case we have just recorded? I boldly answer: no! Everything here conspires to darken the deed and to blacken the doer, whether Schmettau expressly requested, or merely consented to, Lefloch's deadly aid. Let us argue about thus. Whosoever meets with a fellow-being who, without any more urgent cause than mere *taedium vitae*, wishes to rid himself of life, and does not endeavor to dissuade and prevent him, is already wanting in the due appreciation of religious and social duty; if he advise and instigate to the execution of the said purpose by logic and eloquence, or facilitate it by indirect aid, e. g. by supplying a deadly instrument or potion, or by engaging to furnish some convenient locality, he makes himself *particeps criminis*; and, finally, if he perform, as veriest hireling, without sympathy, for a stipulated monetary reward the part of immediate physical executioner, i. e. really do the work in cold blood and with cunning secrecy, and afterwards by subterfuge, prevarication, pretext and lie deny the part he had enacted: of such a person we may safely affirm that avarice, recklessness, venality have so far taken possession of him that he is a dangerous member of society, nay, unfit to live on as a member of any christian community, aye, that he is in *soul*, if not in fact, a common, vulgar *murderer*, and would, *perhaps*, without much hesitation have become an unsolicited and unprovoked assassin for the sake of a like sum of money. — Lefloch had not even extreme want to plead his cause, a starving wife or child to extenuate his guilt; and I for one can bear, without even the slightest merciful misgivings, to see him led off to an ignominious doom.

Returning, however, to Kleist's case, it, doubtless, wears in many respects a very different appearance. Of course, every *mean* and *low* murderous characteristic is entirely foreign to it; yet, it is, methinks, impossible for any rightly organized person even to *excuse* it; nevertheless, many persons have actually — vide §. 59 — *extolled* it!! Was Kleist insane? Certainly not. Could any possible definition of chivalrous honor call upon him to fulfil in such manner an indefinite promise once given? Most assuredly not. Were there not evasions, justifiable and easy ones, left open to him? Doubtless, many. Did he act wholly unselfishly or self-sacrificingly? No; for, as we have seen, he himself had a potent motive, or more than one, for wishing and determining to compass his own death.

Was he merely eager for vain display, romantic interest, tragic immortality? What of insight I have gained into the peculiarities of his psychico-physical organization would strongly incline me to reply in the negative. Had he, then, lived, ought he to have been dealt with as a murderer? But, this is a superfluous question; for, *not* to survive was on his part a pre-determined and necessary condition of the fulfilment of his promise.

Ludwig Tieck has twice penned a biographical sketch of Kleist,¹⁾ and in one of these biographical sketches he says „eine That, wie sein Tod, steigt, wenn wir sie vernehmen, mit einem heiligen (sic!) Schrecken in unsere Seele; und tiefes Mitleid läßt lange kein Urtheil zu, eben so wenig ein bewunderndes, wie ein schöne verhöhnendes“, and adds to this almost super-sympathetic exclamation the unquestionably hyper-skeptical clause „wenn es nach den Begriffen der meisten (!!!) ein Vergehen ist, auf das Leben zu früh zu verzichten.“ Which same beautifully worded (beautiful words were in general the forte of the Romantic school) most circumspect and somewhat equivocal verdict I should scarcely have quoted, did it not serve in its manner and measure to open our eyes to what I cannot but consider the loose moral elements of that school of philosophico-poetic modern German literature of which Tieck himself may be, in conjunction with the two Schlegels, regarded as the founder, of which Kleist was a disciple — the works of *Novalis* are said (vide Bülow, p. XIV of the Preface) to have been found lying open beside the corpses of Kleist and Henriette —, and which had its chief seat, and had attained to its highest blossom, in Berlin at about the time of Kleist's death. Aye, we might here recal to memory the story of Frederick Schlegel and Dorothea Veit (Moses Mendelssohn's eldest daughter) and the once celebrated fragmentical novel *Lucinde*, in which Schlegel under the assumed name of Julius, writing to Dorothea, to whom he gives the name of *Lucinde* (he had won her affections, seduced her to leave her excellent husband, her two subsequently renowned children, her home, and then married her, after she had become divorced from that husband upon whose generous support she and Schlegel for some time afterwards subsisted) says literally what follows.²⁾ „Darum würde ich auch,

¹⁾ Viz. in his edition of Kleist's posthumous works, and in his preface to the select works of Kleist. ²⁾ *Lucinde*, p. 10.

wenn es mir Zeit schiene, eben so froh und eben so leicht eine Tasse Kirsch- oder Lorbeerwasser mit dir ausleeren, wie das letzte Glas Champagner, was wir zusammen tranken, mit den Worten von mir: So laß uns den Rest unsers Lebens austrinken. — So sprach und trank ich eilig, ehe der edelste Geist des Weins verschäumte; und so, das sage ich noch einmal, so laß uns leben und lieben. Ich weiß, auch du würdest mich nicht überleben wollen, du würdest dem voreiligen Gemahle auch im Sarge folgen, und aus Lust und Liebe in den flammenden Abgrund steigen, in den ein rasendes Gefeß die Indischen Frauen zwingt und die zartesten Heiligthümer der Willkühr durch grobe Abficht und Befehl entweiht und zerstört.“ This piece of reciprico-suicidal levity stands under the head of a „dithyrambic fantasia concerning the most beautiful situation“, and, additionally, in this same brief mere fragment of a Novel one case of committed and one case of intended suicide is recorded. We need not wonder that this gifted and learned sensual pantheist subsequently turned Catholic and maligned Luther; we cannot marvel at learning that Dorothea was somewhat disappointed in her married life with him; we may rejoice at finding her, when a widow, writing shortly before her death to Henriette Herz: ¹⁾ „Alles, was wir Weltkinder sonst Poesie des Lebens genannt haben, das ist weit, weit! — Ich könnte sagen, wie Du, ich bin es satt. Aber ich sage es dennoch nicht, und ich bitte und ermahne Dich: sage auch Du es nicht mehr. Sei tapfer! das heißt, wehre Dich nicht, sondern ergieb Dich in tapferer Hetertheit! — Laß den Ueberdruß des Lebens nicht herrschend werden, ich bitte Dich darum, sondern denke beständig daran, daß dieses arme Leben weder Dein Eigenthum, noch Dir zur willkührlichen Benutzung oder zur angenehmen Beschäftigung verliehen worden ist; jeder Tag desselben ist ein Kleinod der Gnade, ein Capital, das Du weder vergraben noch von Dir werfen darfst.“ But we must be surprised to know that so estimable a woman as Mme. Henriette Herz most undoubtedly was undertook to defend that sorry business of the seduction and divorce, and that so great and good a man as Schleiermacher was misled into penning apologetic letters on such a literary performance as Lucinde. ²⁾ Yet, knowing such things, we are the better able to

¹⁾ Henriette Herz. Ihr Leben und ihre Erinnerungen. Herausgegeben von Fürst, 1850, pp. 106—110. ²⁾ His *Briefe über Lucinde Gutzkow* has somewhat maliciously re-published since Schleiermacher's death, with a most disgustingly sneering and frivolous Preface of his own.

account for Tieck's above lines on Kleist's death; — and therefore, for much of this would be *otherwise invidious*, I have here introduced it. — — —

But to return.

Let us picture to ourselves a field of battle. When, for instance, Bonaparte had led his but too obedient host to dance their wanton and heavy war-dance on the icy plains of the North, and the threefold anguish of wounds, cold, and famine was doing its deadly work among the French soldiery, after the battle near Bero-dino „some besought the passers-by to put them to death without delay; but these latter walked quickly past the unfortunate beings, whom they could not rescue, and yet would not fully kill“ (qu'on n'avait ni l'inutile pitié de secourir, ni la pitié cruelle d'achever, as Ségur¹⁾ almost too punningly, yet very graphically, expresses himself). And, would it have been a crime to comply with their request? I doubt it; for they were already, as far as man could discern, death-doomed, and compliance would apparently have been only an act of compatriotic mercy and friendly comradeship. — Or, let us imagine a patient, suffering the agonies of an incurable and necessarily fatal disease, and imploring the physician or some other friendly attendant to put a speedy, final stop with skilful and sure hand to the overwhelming flood of bodily torture. And, would compliance be criminal? Scarcely so, methinks. — Or, let us suppose a person recently bitten by a mad dog, and himself aware of the incipient workings of inevitable hydrophobia, and fearing the consequences that might therefrom ensue unto some of his fellow-beings, if time be lost, to request the nearest trustworthy individual to put him by death forthwith out of harm's way. Would the immediate acting on such a petition be immoral? Surely not, I believe. — And other cognate cases we might put, if need were. Of course, I see that they are only *apparently similar* to, and *essentially different* from, Kleist's action; and, inasmuch as even in such instances human law is bound to put in its veto, severe in its *general* fixations even *beyond the limits of mere morality*, if I mistake not, lest a door be too easily opened unto real murder, and the wholesome horror of destroying human life become diminished, it follows that

¹⁾ Histoire de Napoléon et de la grande armée en 1812, liv. VII, ch. 12:

such a deed as Kleist's must have been taken cognizance of, and penally dealt with, by the Magistracy.

If our Religion and Laws deny to us the right of *taking away* our own life (vide Section V), they ipso facto deny to us also the right of *giving* it away. Therefore, whosoever receives lightly from another what he has reason to believe, know, acknowledge not to be that other's own to dispose of, and allows himself to be induced by inadequate and inappropriate considerations to *make away* with what he has thus received, as if it had been fairly and fully given to him, justly becomes amenable to the criminal courts of the land. — The exceptional case may at all times be exceptionally dealt with; but the rule must remain, and it may be sometimes — I say this without any latitudinarian sentimentality or jesuitical sophistry —: God and His Spirit-law shall still find it just to acquit the one or the other whom man and his word-law have found it right to condemn.

§. 11. Selbstentleibung. Biaiothanatos. Sudden Death. Apolysis.

If the reader should have kindly followed me with patience thus far in such comments as I had to offer on, or such objections as I ventured to make to, the principal usual designations of the act which we are discussing, I must request him still to bear with a few more, much briefer remarks on sundry other expressions which connect themselves immediately with the theme of this treatise of ours.

I. The composition *Selbstentleibung* is, I believe, of comparatively modern origin (the word *entleiben* for *to kill* is, however, old enough; we find it e. g. frequently used in the Carolina). It is e. g. not contained in the 2nd edit. (1802) of Adelung's *Wörterbuch*; but I am unable to state either by whom it was first coined, or when it first came into use. At all events, it may be found adopted by e. g. Krug and de Wette in books of theirs which were published some thirty years ago. — In this term, just as in the analogous formations *Selbsterhaltung*, *Selbstbeherrschung*, i. e. self-preservation, self-control, etc., the *selbst* is, of course, not adverbial = self-wrought, but reflexive = of self, so that it signifies literally the *disembodiment of one's self*.

Consequently, we have thus before us not only, as it were, a merely *external*, but also an ethically *neutral*, appellation which may without any scruple or qualification be applied to every case of the

action under mention. For, be it that the slayer of himself believe the human soul immortal or mortal, be it that he desire his self-consciousness to continue or to cease after death, be it that he consider his final act unlawful or justifiable, and whatsoever image or notion he may have framed and shaped unto himself about human destiny in the Yonder: one thing is clear and certain to us who survive him to speak of his deed, and this one thing is that he was resolved at all hazards to disenthral himself by his own will and force from breathing and working any longer within the confines of *bodily* incasement, that he was more or less sick and weary of the terrestrial lot and form of *corporeal* existence, that he was determined his individual soul should be ejected out of its present *incarnation* (incorporatio, ενσωμάτωσις), „shuffle off this *mortal* coil“, and that he would himself, ere yet the invisible hand of Nature's mysterious laws had caused the scenic curtain to drop, usher in, prematurely, violently, visibly, one catastrophe of earth-life's drama. — We, therefore, safely may say simply: he has „disembodied himself;“ and in speaking thus we ourselves are silent about the momentous question touching his future position to union with God, the service of Nature, the process of Self-development.

Thus, then, the said word is both graphically comprehensive and modestly restrictive, and for my own part I should incline to give it the preference before any one of the terms we have hitherto adduced, though we ourselves shall employ, in order to avoid any appearance of singularity, the ordinary word suicide. Whoso prefers much stronger words, is, if course, welcome to them, e. g. *self-assassination* which Sir Thomas Browne¹⁾ employed. But, on the one hand, it seems to me neither judicious nor just, when merely *naming* so delicate and intricate, so disputed and debateable a topic as the one before us is, to predicate without further ado more than its merely necessary outward attributes and consequences; and, on the other hand, such a strong word as the one just mentioned has something both historically and notionally inapplicable and incorrect about it: an assassin (haschischin, herb-eater, vide p. 114 of Hammer's monograph which we shall quote in §. 45, when speaking of Muhammadanism) was one who partook of a certain inebriating herbal potion for the purpose of fitting himself for doing *deadly work*

¹⁾ Religio Medici, sect. 44.

against others, as was the wont of the disciples of yon well-known Eastern Order; and our own vernacular still connects (vide Webster's Dict. s. v. assassin) with this word „the circumstance of *surprise* or *secrecy* as essential to its signification“, whilst, surely, what a man does unto himself cannot be to him himself a matter of either surprise or secrecy!

II. „Biathanatos“, evidently in the meaning of *the suicide*, is the title which the Rev^d Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, gave to that defence of self-destruction which he penned in his youthful days (vide Section V).

The form of this substantively used adjective varies somewhat in the ancient writers¹⁾ — probably, however, βίαιόθνατος, and not βιόθνατος or βιόθνατος, is the most correct one —; but there can be no doubt about its having signified originally anybody who died a *violent* death, and more especially such a one as had been inflicted *by others*. Indeed, I doubt much, whether it occur at all in the classical Greek writers in the sense of one who had inflicted death *upon himself*, which latter action would be *more definitely* conveyed by the analogous adjective formations αὐτοθνατος, αὐτόφονος. Indeed, βίαιος is often explained passively by βεβιασμένος, forced (vide Passow's Dict.), and I have found sundry passages in Plato where it is evidently used antithetically to ἐκούσιος, voluntary (vide e. g. his de Republica); moreover, the notion of violent or vehement in and by itself does not by any means imply with clearness and certainty selfness, volition on the part of the agent, and, as we shall see in §. 17, when speaking of Virgil, much confusion has arisen from confounding the epithets premature, sudden, violent with self-caused, self-chosen, self-inflicted. Two things may resemble each other very closely in one respect, and yet be essentially different in some other respect. But, whatever may be objected on etymological grounds to Donne's above use of our word, it would seem to be historically justified.

Everybody is aware that their Pagan persecutors lavished, partly from ignorance, partly from frivolousness, and partly from sheer malignity, almost innumerable epithets of mockery and ignominy upon the early christians. Augusti, whilst enumerating the prin-

¹⁾ Vide Stephanus, Thesaurus Graecae Linguae, ediderunt Hase et Dindorf, 1833, T. II, p. 240. s. v. βίαιόθνατος.

cial ones,¹⁾ mentions also Biathanatos which he has not hesitated to explain by Autocheir, and justly so, as I take it. The needful details on this matter we shall not fail to introduce in §§. 66, 69, 70; here, therefore, only a few passing hints. *Actual* suicide was, comparatively speaking, not of very frequent occurrence among the early christians, and, perhaps, of even very rare occurrence at the time when the Pagans first stigmatized them as Biathanatoi; therefore, we must conceive this term to have applied primarily to what we might call *mediate* or *indirect* suicide on their part; for, having examined closely into all the offensive words which the Pagans branded the early christians with, every one of them has seemed to me to have some *apparent* foundation at least, as I could easily show, if this were the place for doing so. Unquestionably, namely, *extreme* eagerness for martyrdom led many of the early christians to denounce themselves, to deliver themselves up, to court and to provoke death at the hands of their Heathen antagonists, so that we can scarcely wonder if, as it was the case, such martyrdom-woers among them seemed to deserve the name of suicides, because they, as if from contempt of death and desire for immortal felicity — and this was the case with many of them — rushed *suicide-like* into, not only death-peril, but certain violent death, albeit ultimately inflicted by others, not by themselves. It is true, at least as early as the 8th century we find Biathanatos applied also to such as were condemned to death for their crimes and judicially executed (vide Du Cange's Glossarium s. v.); but, unless I be very much mistaken, it was not in this passive sense that it was made a term of reproach to the early christians, for the above reasons, nor merely in the general sense of *untimely*, dying too early, as e. g. Tertullian evidently on one occasion employs it in juxtaposition with *ahorif*, too early born (de anima, c. 56), in which sense it might, of course, be applied to all *Martyrs* as such. Moreover, in the christian communities themselves our word was evidently employed in the veritable sense of „a suicide“ as early at least as the 5th century, since the *Latin* monkish chronicler and teacher, Cassianus, when speaking of Judas, says what follows:²⁾ „sed etiam vitam ipsam communi exitu finire non meruit, eamque biathanati morte

¹⁾ Denkwürdigkeiten aus der christlichen Archäologie, B. XI, pp. 26—28. ²⁾ Coenobiorum instituta, lib. VII, c. 14 in fine, opera omnia, edid. Gazaecus, 1733, pp. 124, 125.

conclusit.“ The editor informs us that some copies read „violenta morte“; but this cannot be of much importance in reference to the assertion we have just made, inasmuch as the same Cassianus in another work of his (the quotation itself shall be made in §. 13, and will be discussed in the last Section of our Treatise, since it bears upon christian anti-suicidal legislation) employs the very same term in the very same sense.

The proved *treble* meaning of the word at issue, however, cannot but render it too indefinite for general adoption, since it might easily be misunderstood; and we pass on to what has been proposed and put forth¹⁾ as the English rendering of βίαιθανασία.

III. Sudden death.

In the third quarter of the 18th century, a Frenchman, Grossley by name, whilst endeavoring to prove to his fellow-countrymen the extreme proneness of the English to suicide says, among many other things, that there is a particular prayer in our Protestant Liturgy against self-destruction:²⁾ an assertion which is sufficiently serious to deserve a few brief annotations.

„From *sudden death*, good Lord, deliver us.“ This well-known petition in the Litany was, I presume, what M. Grossley interpreted into the said anti-suicidal „particular prayer“; at least, there is no other in the Book of Common Prayer which is likely to have appeared to him in this light. I have consulted, albeit only from curiosity, two or three English clerical expositors of the same book, e. g. Mant, Wheatly, but they certainly never so much as dreamt of connecting the said petition with the topic of our enquiry (though our reverend and right reverend interpreters are wont to find rather too much than too little in suchlike theological matters). And justly thus, as I think, for the two followings reasons.

Firstly. We evidently ought to understand by „sudden death“ any kind of death whatsoever which befalls us without warning and, consequently, without any premonitory and available summons unto due and desirable domestic preparation for leaving Time, or religious preparation for entering Eternity; in a word, without the needful or wished-for leisure and opportunity for „setting our house in order.“ Death by assassination from the hand of another is suchlike sudden

¹⁾ Vide the article „the vision of sudden death“ in Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1849, p. 741. ²⁾ Quarterly Review for 1814, p. 541. The book itself I have not seen.

death; but so likewise death may be from disease of the heart or a stroke of apoplexy, death arising naturally and systematically out of our physical organism, but only not by us foreknown, foreseen, or expected; whatsoever outward violent casualty deprives instantaneously of life, brings sudden death; nay, even an unforeseen and unexpected judicial verdict of „guilty“ on a *capital* charge might, in regard to its consequence be termed, to a certain extent, sudden death, so that, for instance, Noble¹⁾ was not altogether in the wrong, when he, finding himself unexpectedly condemned to death, craved *delay* of execution by reminding the judge that „the best of Christians are taught to pray against a sudden death.“ We might also compare, by way of illustration, in Shakspeare's *Measure for Measure* (II, 2) the following passage. Angelo. „He must die to morrow.“ Isabella. „To — morrow? Oh! that's *sudden*. Spare him, spare him. He's *not prepar'd* for death!“

Secondly. Suicide, properly so called, is generally, nay, almost invariably, a deed more or less deliberately undertaken, a longer or shorter time premeditated, and, therefore, by its very nature the direct opposite of sudden death.

However, if I may be permitted to diverge for a moment from our immediate enquiry, as to the afore-said petition itself, it would seem to me somewhat questionable, whether „the best of Christians“, as Noble expressed himself, ought to feel themselves called upon to utter it so repeatedly and constantly, more especially if, as yon anonymous writer in *Blackwood* avers, sudden death be, in force of its position, meant and made „to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities, as the last of curses.“ — Certainly, there are very many reasons which quickly suggest themselves to everybody, why the one or the other, nay, most of us haply, should wish for such a gradual and forewarned dismissal out of life as would admit of so-called spiritual preparation, of humanly affectionate leave-taking, and of prudential disposition of our worldly affairs; but yet, methinks, some, if not many, of the very „best“ Christians more especially might be loath to offer up the petition at issue as a matter of stereotype *daily* or *sabbatical* duty. „The walk of life is that of a soldier in battle — always death-firm, and *death-ready*“: to me there seems to be more genuine scriptural spirituality and psycho-

¹⁾ Criminal Recorder, II, p. 166.

nomical nobleness in this precept which poor Charlotte Stieglitz inscribed in her Diary. Any particular *mood*, as any individual *action*, is only a link in life's chain which latter in its entirety is a *state*, i. e. what which is essential, because continuous, in the soul of man. What in the *process of life* has been sown into the character's deep furrows, and has grown beneath the influence of sunshine and storm, of environments and temptations, of labor and prayer — is the Harvest which Death at his own appointed season with his scythe mows down and with his hand, gentle or grim, sheaves and garners, whether it be ripe or unripe, good or bad. Whatsoever, on the contrary, has been sown on the more or less shallow soil — I have hinted at this matter more than once, and would fain insist upon it here again — of a deathbed only, has not had time or space sufficient for taking root and gaining shape, and cannot, I ween, in its comparative insignificance and worthlessness do much towards — of course, there may be exceptions here too — *deciding* the soul's destiny unto Weal or Woe. — It may be that *even* „the best of Christians“ can scarcely fail to experience inwardly at any and every moment a certain measure of anxious shrinking from the sentence of Him who, with eyes of flaming penetration and scales of unerring justice, sits upon the Throne; but, it is equally certain that *just* „the best of Christians“, knowing well that the keys of Life and Death are held by an omnipotent hand that can use them to unlock and to close as He may think fit, and being heedful of yon „watch ye, since ye know not the day, nor the hour, when the Lord cometh“, will keep their spirit-wings ever stretched for flight, as onwards and upwards, so homewards, yonderwards: and unto *such* death is *not* „sudden“ at any season or under any circumstances; and, perhaps, if they could but have their own will and way, they would fain be spared slow agonies or admonishing symptoms, and rather depart upright sitting and in armor clad on the battle-field of duty's work or amid the pleasant converse of tried and trusted friends than lying prostrate upon a couch of lingering disease and administered to by sacerdotal rites which are at best mere formalities.

Indeed, I cannot but incline to believe that it was not the mere term „sudden death“ itself which induced M. Grossley to interpret the above-mentioned prayer of suicide, since, if he translated it literally into French, he could scarcely have so misunderstood it, inasmuch as mourir de mort soudaine, for instance, surely does not refer

to suicide. He might also have recalled to memory the well-known incident which both Suetonius¹⁾ and Plutarch²⁾ record about Julius Caesar's expressed preference for dying suddenly, where the respective Latin and Greek terms „repentinum inopinatumque“, „ἀπρόδοξα“ unquestionably allude either to natural death by some quickly killing disease, or — to assassination, death in battle, etc. On the contrary, what led him to the said exposition was, in all probability, the circumstance that the Newspapers are in the habit of stating that NN *died suddenly*, when NN has died suicidally. But, this *vague* and, if you like, all but truthless, phrase is simply a meiligma which, however, as I think, may be justified, since, undoubtedly, the public as such has no right to be initiated into the exact mode and cause of every sinner's death, and since, moreover, a certain degree of delicate ambiguity may be highly advisable for many respects opposite to the immediate relatives, more especially the children if such there be, of the deceased. Indeed, except in some few *remarkable isolated instances*, the Newspapers, would, perhaps, act more discreetly, were they *not* to record in broad language the deaths under mention as mere food for idle curiosity.

IV. Hugo Grotius, a man so conspicuously and undisputedly preeminent in an age and a country of scholarlike celebrities, and the permanent interest and value of whose chief work the number of commentators it has found would alone suffice to prove, and to which reference will again be made more than once in the course of this Treatise, therein, when arguing on and against suicide, says also what follows. „Ideo (i. e. because suicide is irreligious and unlawful) Hebraei mori vocabant ἀπολύεσθαι, id est *dimitti*, ut videre est non tantum Luc. II, 29. sed et in Graeca versione Gen. XV, 2 et Num. XX in fine; quod genus loquendi et Graecis usitatum.“ He then quotes a passage from Themistius, and another from Plutarch which we shall look at by and by, as we must first of all examine the biblical quotations upon which he himself has laid the main stress.

(Luke II, 29.) This is the well-known joyful exclamation of Simeon „Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace“, in which the active form (ἀπολύεις) of the said verb occurs. (Gen. XV). LXX. ἀπολύομαι; Vulg. *dimittor*; author. vers. „I go.“ (Num. XX).

¹⁾ Life of Caesar, c. 87. ²⁾ Life of Caesar, c. 63. ³⁾ De jure belli ac pacis, lib. II, c. XIX, §. 5, 3

LXX. ἀπαλύθη; Vulg. dimissus est; author. vers. „was dead.“ Inasmuch, however, as Grotius is here speaking expressly of the „Hebraei“, our principal and proper question must be: what is the exact power of the terms employed in the Hebrew original? For, of course, aught resembling binding, either dogmatic or linguistic, authority the Septuagint cannot be granted to possess (vide §. 45). In Gen. XV the verb יָלַךְ and in Num. XX the verb מָנַח is used, both in Kal, and since the former means *ivit*, *abiit*, and the latter *expiravit*, *efflavit vitam*, both, of course designate dying as something *active*, something that, as it were, man himself does! — The very same remark would apply likewise to מָוַת, *ire*, which also occasionally occurs to express our „to die“, and might be paraphrased by our somewhat sentimental „to go to one's long home“, or the simpler and more usual German idiom *heimgehen*. — Thus much in reference to the passages which Grotius adduces; whilst, however, occupied with Hebrew phraseology in regard to death, as far as any ethical moment may therefrom be extracted, we will enter somewhat further into the matter.

Beier¹⁾ affirms thus: מָוַת, quod pro *mori* usurpant Hebraei, proprie indicat *laxare*: unde מָוַת, *dimissi*, *relaxati* (vinculis) dicuntur pro *mortuis*, placide defunctis.“ If the student take the trouble to open the all but exhaustive larger lexicographic work of Gesenius',²⁾ he will there find stated of the verb מָוַת that its primary signification is not trans. liberum demisit aliquem, though still less intrans. abiit, discessit, spec. e vita = mortuus est. Moreover, if he consult all the examples which Gesenius adduces, and they are but few, the result is that the part. pass. does not occur at all in the O. T. in the sense above specified, or even in a kindred sense. The inference, therefore, is that Beier refers by „Hebraei“ to the post-testamental *Rabbis* and their application or acceptance of the term under mention. Indeed, I the more suppose so from what I find stated in Buxtorf's Rabbinical lexicon s. v. מָוַת.³⁾ „In Niphal מָוַת usitatissimum est pro dimitti, liberum esse vel fieri, discedere, migrare ex hac vita, mori“, and מָוַת, „discessus, migratio, mors, obitus.“ But, when the *Rabbis* thus call the death of the righteous

¹⁾ Ad Ciceronis Oratt. Fragmenta, 1821, vide pp. 148—153. ²⁾ Thesaurus philologicus criticus linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaeae V. T., s. v. ³⁾ Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum, Basle, 1740.

liberation, viz. of the soul, I doubt much, whether this expression on their lips signify aught more pregnant than what we should, without any specific relation to *God as agent*, simply designate deliverance from the bonds of the flesh, the troubles and temptations of the world. It is merely a kind of Neo-Platonic philosophical or monastic-ascetic mode of speech, and as such *too general* to involve any argumentative element in regard to our present specific inquiry.

Nevertheless, there doubtless do exist in the writings of the O. T. sundry Hebrew verbs and forms of speech in reference to death which have, as far as *man* is concerned, *passive*, i. e. as far as *God* is concerned, *active*, import. Thus, for instance, the well-known Niphal of קָרַע which our version renders by „to be congregated or assembled“, viz. to the already deceased forefathers. Still more significant in this point of view, however, is the species of accusativus cum infinitivo construction קָרַע לְשׁוֹנִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי which occurs of Elijah (1 Kings XIX, 4), Jonah (IV, 8), [cf. also Job XXXI, 30, and XII, 10], and which — imperfectly rendered in our authorized version — is ¹⁾ to the effect: he demanded his soul, i. e. from God, in order to die = he requested that God would liberate his soul or breath.

Nor may it be quite out of place here to remind the reader that likewise in the Greek text of the book of Tobit (III, 6) a kindred form of speech is to be met with: ἐπίταξον ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ πνεῦμά μου, ὅπως ἀπολυθῶ, „command that my spirit be taken away aloft (scil. by the angels sent from God), that I may be liberated.“ — Indeed, Rabbinical Judaism indulged somewhat liberally in a sort of *thanatos-angelology*. Thus it fabled ²⁾ of Gabriel as the angel of death (מַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת) in Israel, and Samael as the one out of the promised land, both of them under the chieftainship of Metatron, and both with subordinate hosts of ministering angels, in which same hosts there is one angel destined for every soul, arranged after different ranks according to the worthiness of the soul that has to be fetched (cf. by the by St. Paul's statement, Col. I, 16, about the gradations in the angel-world): some echo of, or accommodation to, which Jewish tradition is discernible in the „and it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was *carried by the angels* into Abraham's bosom“ (Luke XVI, 22).

¹⁾ Cf. Hitzig, die zwölf kleinen Propheten, 1838, p. 372. ²⁾ Vide Eisenmenger, *entdecktes Judenthum*, Cap. 19, §§. I, pp. 854, 855.

Be this enough on ancient Hebrew *words*. In Section IV — and this is more important and decisive — we shall learn that ancient Hebrew *tenets* were anything but of a distinctive *anti-suicidal* complexion. We, therefore, now proceed to say a few words on the two other quotations which Grotius makes from Pagan Greek writers.

Themistius, from whom the first of them is taken, was a peripatetic philosopher of the 4th cent. p. C. The quotation itself is simply a proof of the fact that in his age Greek writers occasionally employed the verb ἀπολύεσθαι to designate „to die“, and the substantive ἀπόλυσις to designate „death.“ I am not acquainted with any of Themistius' writings, and do not know in what context the said passage occurs; but I feel perfectly certain that the said passage in and by itself proves nothing in regard to either anti-suicidal or pro-suicidal views. In other more or less cotemporary authors, e. g. Libanius (Orat. III, p. 142, as quoted by Beier), similar utterances occur, and — vide on Libanius what will be said in §§. 24 and 35 — decide nothing at all in regard to the utterers' own ethical opinions on our topic, as we will now endeavor to illustrate by a closer inspection of the second quotation by which Grotius attempted to establish his point: *ἕως ἃν ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἀπολύσῃ ἡμᾶς*, which belongs to Plutarch.¹⁾ Firstly. Plutarch himself was not by any means a decided antagonist to suicide (vide §. 31). Secondly. We find him,²⁾ when actually arguing in favor and defence of suicide, quoting from Euripides³⁾ a phrase which is to all intents and purposes identical with the one at issue: *λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτὸς, ὅταν ἔρῃ θάλασσαν*, which is one of those designedly equivocal replies by means of which Dionysos, being himself the Dasmon, befools the pedantic and inquisitive old moralist, Pentheus; and of which we are assured⁴⁾ that the Stoics used to quote it for the express purpose of vindicating and advocating self-destruction as a means of delivering the soul out of the bonds and prison of the body. Indeed, Horace, when speaking of the „*vir bonus et sapiens*“ in the Stoic sense (vide §. 19) evidently cites and uses it for the very purpose just mentioned.⁵⁾

*Ipsae deus, simul atque volam, me solvet, opinor,
Hoc sentit: moriar; mors ultima linea rerum est.*

¹⁾ De consolatione, ad Apollonium, cap. XIII. ²⁾ De animi tranquillitate, p. 861 in T. VII of opera omnia edid. Reiske. ³⁾ Bacchae, l. 426 in Bothe's edition. ⁴⁾ Vide Bähr's Ann. in D. XXX, p. 1476 of Plutarch's moralische Schriften. ⁵⁾ Epistolae, lib. I, XVI, lines 78, 79. Cf. however what will be said in §. 12.

Dionysos having appeared in human form at Thebes, and his riotous doings among the Maenads having kindled the ire of Pentheus, he, Dionysos, has been taken captive by one of the slaves of this Theban king, and the latter threatens to have him put in fetters, and cast into prison: whereupon Dionysos uses the words under mention. In the sequel, however, he gives Pentheus to understand that he himself is Bacchus, that Bacchus is near to him now, sees what he has to suffer, abides by him, though the godless monarch cannot see the God, etc. Subsequently thrown into prison, *he liberates himself*, and, by way of revenge for the indignity which has been put upon him, causes Pentheus to be torn into pieces by the Bacchae. Inasmuch, therefore, as Bacchus was allying in the said words to such supernatural aid and strength as lay in his own *divine* personality, and rested his confident hope of liberation upon a *supernatural* power and aid within himself, the above application of the said Euripidean line to suicide is not warranted by the context, but is merely a turning of a mystical allusion to an ethical account.

Inference: the phrase „the Divinity liberates or dismisses man by death“, when taken in and by itself, does not elucidate much, and demonstrates nothing at all. Its meaning and force can be rightly and fully interpreted only by special consideration of the mind and purpose of those who employ it, and such consideration may impart to it sometimes inferentially and relatively, but never directly and absolutely, argumentative significance. The matter, namely, stands thus. The said mode of speech proves the existence of the notion or simile of the body as a *dungeon* or *prison*. It is true, this notion or simile was more especially current among the *anti-suicidal* Pythagoreans, Platonists, Neo-Platonists (vide Section I), and thence e. g. the Neo Platonist Hierocles uses (vide §. 23) the expression under mention anti-suicidally, as does also the church-father Gregory of Nazianz in one of his carmina (vide Section V). But, the identical notion or simile was likewise not unfamiliar to the *pro-suicidal* Stoics,¹⁾ and thence e. g. Epiktetos and Marcus Aurelius employ it (vide §. 29) pro-suicidally. Which same diversity, however, is only apparent antagonism, as we shall see in due season,

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. Seneca in his consol. ad Helv. c. 11, and in epist. 79, and Lucanus, Pharsalia, VI, 721.

inasmuch as the classical ancients conceived and defined the word God or Daemon either as something objective, i. e. a ruling power outside of man, or as something subjective, i. e. man's own Reason, Will, Inclination. — Nor did, indeed, I may in conclusion remark, the mystical doctrine of the Neo Platonists which assigned the liberation of the souls of men from the bonds of the body to the ministry of Angels only ¹⁾ (ἄγγελοι δὲ λύουσι μόνον τῶν δεσμῶν τῆς ὤλης, the drift of which μόνον the reader may see by turning to the passage itself), interfere with their occasionally employing the transitive verbs ἐξίέναι, ἐξαλθεῖν, ἀπαλθεῖν for „to die“ in the indisputably Stoic sense of these terms, ²⁾ viz. that man possesses not only the power of freeing himself by death, but also under given restrictive circumstances the right to do so.

¹⁾ Jamblichus (?), de mysteriis Aegyptiorum, sect. II, c. 5. p. 46 in Gale's edition, and this editor's notes on p. 210; p. 93 of Thomas Taylor's somewhat mystical version, 1821, whose Preface vide about the doubts on the authenticity of the said work. ²⁾ Cf. Creuzer, Plotini opera omnia, vol. III, p. 124 of the Annotationes.

Introduction.

CHAPTER II. JUDICIAL.

§. 12. Preliminary remark.

Since much of what we shall have to adduce and to discuss in this our second introductory Chapter appertains more or less to the province of *medical science* and experience, I had best at once frankly avow my utter ignorance of both speculative and practical physics. I never took the anatomist's knife into my hand; I know next to nothing about the relative shapes, sizes, appearances, functions of *man's cerebral and vital organs* in health or disease; nay, I never even entered a lunatic asylum, public or private, for the purpose of watching and marking the multifarious characteristics and distinctive manifestations of mental derangement. In earlier years, I have perused, and even studied, not without interest and delight, sundry so-called Psychologies and Histories of the Soul, a branch of literature which constitutes so favorite and favored a pursuit at German Colleges, though almost entirely neglected and ignored at our own. Probably, however, the said works, were I to re-open them now, would appear to me less instructive or edifying than they then did. Necessary though it may be, in the service of systematic science, to split asunder, as it were, the inner human faculties, carefully to arrange them as e. g. spirit, soul, imagination, judgment, will, memory, etc., and to bound accurately, and delineate minutely, each and all of these in their presumptive or proveable respective reciprocities, reactions, causes, effects; yet, when one has long ceased to care much about the nice definitions of the Schools, and would fain learn for life and from life, then the varied contacts with others into which affection, vocation, or antagonism bring us, teaching us

something about their qualities and tendencies, bid us also at the same time look within ourselves, and, if I mistake not, whosoever endeavors, modestly and faithfully, to learn the specific task of *self-knowledge* fully and aright, is on the high road to the solution of the problem of human nature *generically*, and will content himself with basing his study of man as a living totality and a moral phenomenon rather upon his own simple experience, observation, and reflection than upon the subtle elucidations and demonstrations which are to be got out of the Books of those who philosophize in their Studies, and with much pains-taking classify their human herbaria. — However, it shall be my endeavor in this chapter, as it is under such circumstances my obvious duty, not to spin too long or too fine a woof, lest it might break in my unskilled hands. Common prudence must bid me leave purely anatomical facts and pathological phenomena to those whose bow can carry further, and may, without any fear of its snapping, be more strongly stretched.

§. 13. The relation of Insanity to suicide.

If you would fain glance at the most spectrally melancholy and the most solemnly mysterious page in the annals of our race, turn to that which treats of Insanity with its many forms and hues, sources and issues, of man's real or presumptive Incapacity to discern between what is either universally acknowledged to be, or has been legally fixed as being, Right and Wrong. No thoughtful and observant person can possibly deny that *moral accountability* may become *modified*, without becoming therefore *removed*, that man's inner light may, as it were, decline into evening shade or deepening dusk, without sinking into midnight darkness, and that, consequently, so-called medical jurisprudence or forensic medicine may oftentimes find it anything but easy to compute and determine *what* measure of light has actually remained, when one or the other crime was committed. Thence, the ever-renewed enquiries and researches about the position of Insanity to Criminality in general; for instance, not very long ago among ourselves the deliberations and disquisitions of the collective English Bench of Judges,¹⁾

¹⁾ As reprinted in Phillimore's appendix to his edition of Blackstone's commentaries on the Laws of England.

when Macnaghten had attempted the late Sir Robert Peel's life, and mistaken his victim, which, however, can scarcely be said to have furthered us much in untying the Gordian knot. —

All, however, I shall attempt in the present § will be a rapid sketch of the gradual growth of the belief in Insanity as the mediate or immediate cause of suicide, only, however, as far as European civilization is concerned. The comments which will attach themselves to the said sketch the reader must take into the bargain for what little they may prove worth.

I. According to Classical Antiquity.

I will not tire the reader with many tales from the annals of Greek and Roman mythic and heroic ages in which our attention is already directed to the *occasional* nexus between suicide and a certain species of insanity, e. g. in the cases of Ajas Oileus, Ino, Britomartis, Butes, Brennus, the two over-curious sisters of Pandrosus, where e. g. Dionysos, Apollo, Athene are averred to have avenged themselves by afflicting with suicidal madness those who had incurred their displeasure. Three examples may suffice for our purpose. No profane person durst approach, on pain of death, the sacred grove of Ceres Kabiria in Boeotia; and the transgressor, if he escaped the avenging priests, became mad and slew himself, or was killed by lightning.¹⁾ The superstitious, thus Plutarch complains,²⁾ thought so ill of Artemis as to conceive and declare her an instigatrix to suicide. And the Neo Platonist Celsus exclaims — according to the churchfather Origenes' extract³⁾ in his very lengthy refutation of this Pagan's virulent attacks on Christianity — what Mosheim⁴⁾ Germanizes thus. „Wie viele, die sich in den Tempeln ungebührlich und unanständig verhalten haben, sind auf der Stelle abgestraft worden? Einige sind gleich wahnsinnig geworden, einige haben ihre heimlichen Missethaten selber offenbaret, einige haben sich selber das Leben genommen; einige sind in unheilbare Krankheiten verfallen; ja, einige sind gar durch eine erschreckliche Stimme, die aus dem Innersten des Tempels hervorgebrochen, getödtet worden.“ — Self-evidently, suchlike anecdotes are, if we must have facts, devoid of importance; but, nevertheless, the utterances which con-

¹⁾ Vide Vollmer, mythologisches Wörterbuch, pp. 988, 989 in voce Kabira.
²⁾ De superstitione, §. 10. ³⁾ Lib. VII, c. 45. ⁴⁾ Aht Bücher von der Wahrheit des christlichen Religion wider den Weltweisen Celsus, aus dem Griechischen über-
 184, 176, p. 888.

nect themselves therewith are notionally of some interest. Upon the irreligious the respective offended Deity inflicted madness, and the thus madness-stricken in their turn put an end to their own lives. Probably we must in connexion with matters of this description think of some sort of mental shock, physical injury, or priestly trick, not now to be ascertained, and scarcely worth the trouble of enquiring into. Even as death by lightning was referred more especially to the Divinities because, I presume, of the apparent connexion of the skyey thunderbolt with the Olymp: so self-slaughter, if occurring after some supposed iniquitous action, was supposed to have been the consequence of some Divine over-clouding of the intellect or mysterious bewitchment. Here that matter of the Artemis-instigation is specially significant. We know that Artemis or Diana was the Divinity who presided over the Moon, that the popular creed of almost all nations implies and urges the influences of the lunar changes upon the human intellect and passions in regard to insanity, that the said assumption has found a place in the phraseology of the N. T. itself, e. g. *σαλνιαζόμενος* (vide *Matth. IV, 24* and *XVII, 15*), and is still stamped into currency by the modern terms *lunatic*, *monbŭchtig*, etc. We know further that the ancients often identify or confound Artemis or Selene with Hekate, the Goddess of Magic (and, as *Diodorus Sikulus*, lib. III, c. 57, incidentally informs us, Selene herself ended, according to the mythology of the Atlanteens, suicidally), thus connecting various unearthly, pernicious doings and effects with the Moon — probably, the connecting link between the moon and witchcraft was the Night; for, popular belief still avers that moonshine is the period most favorable to magical operations —, and, perhaps, the radix of the very word *μαίνεσθαι*, to be mad, might be found in *μήν*, moon, though the Greek lexicographers conjecture very differently.

No doubt, then, also in the mythic and heroic ages of classical paganism a sort of occasional nexus between suicide and derangement was hinted at, but only in some peculiar isolated cases which would scarcely seem to involve aught essentially kindred to our modern medico-psychological definitions of insanity. — Therefore, when the Greek tragic writers began to represent such themes as still belonged to the shadowy realm of the mythos, and to render their ancient national mythoi more human, more intelligible, more ethically and psychologically just and true, according to their own

more intellectual discernment of things, they never, or scarcely ever, present suicide as an action originating in what we should now-a-days term Insanity, but represent it rather as an action anything but impossible or improbable beside perfect rationality. Let us take Sophokles' beautiful tragedy of Ajas by way of illustration.

Evidence and proof sufficient that the great Greek dramatist conceived the Homeric hero's suicide as an act deliberately undertaken and upon principle accomplished, his mind being at the time not even in a state of passionate excitement, much less under the spell of aught like what we should properly term insanity, are afforded by e. g. the concluding lines of one of his soliloquies which is too long here to quote entire:¹⁾

ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηῖσθαι
τὸν εὐγενῆ χρεῖ.

Nay, it is the very prominence given by Sophokles to the calm determination and clear reasoning which induce Ajas to slay himself on which the most circumspect among the most recent monographers on this tragedy, e. g. Osann²⁾ and Kannegiesser,³⁾ lay decided stress as on one of the most sublime intellectual and aesthetical excellences of the entire work. The former says. „Sein Selbstmord ist eine frei gewählte, bewusste Handlung, wozu ihn der Schmerz über die nicht ausföhrbare, beleidigte Ehre nach der Ansicht der Alten nothwendig bewegen musste. Auch gewinnt Ajas die Idee des Selbstmords erst, nachdem sein völliges Bewußtsein zurüdgekehrt; sein Selbstmord ist kein im Wahnsinn des Schmerzes ergriffenes, letztes, verzweifelnbes Mittel, noch größeren Schmerzen dadurch zu entgehen, sondern eine Handlung, die aus voller Ueberzeugung des nothwendigen Todes entsprungen ist.“ The latter. „Der Selbstmord ist eine durchaus freie Handlung, ja es ist diese Handlung mit Kampf gegen das Schicksal verbunden, wohl verstanden, sofern das Schicksal in allem dem besteht, was dem Willen des Menschen feindlich entgegentritt.“ — Similarly also Grote (in his History of Greece); less correctly, as it seems to me, the author of the article on Sophokles in Smith's Classical Dictionary.

It is true, Euripides in his already quoted drama of Helena — line 96 in Bothe's edition — lets the heroine, when Teukros tells

¹⁾ Παρά τινος κ. τ. λ., lines 465 sqq. in Lobeck's edit. ²⁾ Ueber des Sophokles Ajas, 1820, pp. 26, 27. ³⁾ Ueber den Ajas des Sophokles, 1823, p. 15.

her that his brother, this same Ajas, had rushed upon his own sword, ask and remark thus:

μαίνετ' ; ἐπαι τίς σωφρονῶν¹⁾ ἐλαίῃ τάδ' ἄν;

This, however, really means nothing at all, as we may easily convince ourselves by pursuing the matter a little more closely.

a. Nothing can be more premeditated or more tranquil than (vide what has been said in §. 9) Helene's own frequent contemplation and resolution to destroy herself, than e. g. her own and her spouse's, Menelaos', discussion about terminating their lives voluntarily, if they should fail in making their escape safely together out of Egypt. b. When Teukros informs her that the sons of Pindareus had on her account died in the same manner as Ajas, she does not venture upon any similar disapproving observation. c. Teukros, by making no reply to the above question, and offering no observation on the above comment, of hers, would seem to take them for a mere passionate outburst of unreflective surprise. d. And, doubtless, Euripides himself meant them for nothing more, if we compare the tenor of other dramas of his. Let us, for instance, contemplate the bearing of the conduct of Herakles upon our immediate topic in that very Euripidean drama which bears our word insanity (Ἡρακλῆς μαινόμενος) on its brow already. Herakles, whilst laboring under the influence of a paroxysm of madness or fury with which angry divinities, Hera through the instrumentality of Lyssa, had visited him, murders his wife and his three little sons; but, it is only and expressly *after he had returned to perfectly rational consciousness* that he, shame-filled and anguish-stricken, begins to deliberate with himself, whether he ought not to terminate his own life too in the one or the other voluntary manner (lines 1111—1127, and cf. 1309—1312). When he is in the midst of such gloomy reflections, however, his friend Theseus enters, argues with him, and finally proposes to him a mode of propitiation: whereupon, Herakles, having first of all merely deferred the execution of his resolve, is at last fully dissuaded from persevering in his design, and resigns himself to life again.

¹⁾ Why Hermann here emends this reading into σωφρονῶν, I do not know. Cf. also the commencement of Lucian's 29th dialogue in the dialogi mortuorum.

The distinguished German critic, A. W. Schlegel, when commenting on the antique drama, says¹⁾ that therein „der Selbstmord geschieht mehrentheils, wo nicht im Wahnsinn, doch in einem Zustande von Leidenschaft, nach einem plötzlich erlebten Unglück, der keiner Ueberlegung Raum läßt.“ Howsoever true this last modifying clause may be, its purport does not come under the head of Insanity properly so called, since it, taken strictly, simply alludes to such manifold *general* causes of suicide as exist equally now-a-days among ourselves; and, therefore, it need not detain us here. *In a fashion*, all violent passions, of whatsoever kind they may be, whether e. g. grief or anger, might be said almost to annihilate for the moment accountability; but, whither would not such a vague and lax theory lead, or, rather, mislead, us?

I know not, whether, after all, in those early ages of European civilization the multitude who believed in crude myths, or even, perhaps, the poets who interpreted and transformed those myths, connected with the word Insanity that most stringent and scientific meaning which we of latest modern christendom are wont to attach to it. The bare existence of the *word* proves nothing; for, as we shall by and by see, even in the present time, except, perchance, on the lips of scientific physicians and psychologists, the word itself does not include within itself any distinct and certain *thought*. Who, indeed, that thinks at all can fail to be aware that our own customary and popular phraseology, the mere effect as well as the unmistakeable evidence oftentimes of vulgar credulity or superficial insight, ascribes to Insanity much of what does not legitimately appertain in the least thereto? — Consequently, even if the ancient Greek tragic poets occasionally did, in the current idiom of their country, predicate a nexus between insanity and suicide, this would prove little or nothing in regard either to *real fact* or *their own individual belief*, unless we could establish the exact notion which they themselves attached, and intended their hearers and readers to attach, to the word „Insanity.“

Also among the ancient Greeks, no doubt, in early and earliest ages Insanity in its severest form sometimes appeared; but, to what extent, speaking numerically, I have no means of divining; incline, however, rather to imagine that it was not a frequent phenomenon.

¹⁾ Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur, B. I, p. 189 of edit. 2.

If, namely, veritable Insanity be, speaking quite in general, one of the baneful and mournful fruits which e. g. excessive luxury, artificial indulgences, religious excitement, an insalubrious climate bear, then, surely, such joyous temperament, gymnastic exercises, genial worship and bright sky as we cannot but believe the Greeks in the more primitive periods of their history to have possessed, practised, rendered, dwelt under, must in their united influence have powerfully contributed to keep off every intensified potency of mental and physical disease, disorganization, derangement. And, indeed, if we look at what e. g. Euripides in almost any one of his dramas (vide his *Orestes*, his *Iphigenia in Tauris*, his *Troades*, his *Andromache*, his *Suppliques*, and his *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in various parts) introduces to us under the name of Insanity, we cannot but experience considerable difficulty in convincing ourselves that he connected with that term to the full the misery-fraught and most humiliating state which we at this time of day should denominate, if speaking correctly and accurately, Insanity. I will briefly elucidate this position. *Orestes* is represented as insane, and more than once contemplates suicide; but, nevertheless, he often both speaks and acts in a manner we should call most rational and well-planned. The Greek herald *Talthybios* would fain, exclaiming „thou art mad over thy woe, O unhappy one“, stop *Hekabe's* voluntary path into the flames, upon which she herself is bent, seeing in such a death her greatest glory. As *Hermione's* nurse says to her: „yet, should I let thee rage freely that thou mightst inflict death upon thyself?“ — so the Chorus asks *Evadne*, who slays herself over the corpse of her spouse, and boasts of her courage —, forthwith: „how sayest thou? what insane enigma speakest thou there?“ Verily, as it seems to me, suchlike yoking together of the reproach of madness with the attempt or commission of self-destruction on the part of Euripides' dramatic personages seems merely a sort of poetic self-contradiction on the poet's part, and in no wise seriously meant, just as he lets *Iphigenia* exclaim „to behold this sun-light is the sweetest! death so horrible! mad whoso wishes to die! a wretched life is better than a beautiful death!“ that same *Iphigenia* who ultimately, despite the remonstrances and resistance of her mother *Klytæmnestra* and her lover *Achilleus*, willingly and joyfully embraces a sacrificial death. Also, the later poetic and prosaic representations of the legendary deaths of *Herkules* and *Dido* tell the

same tale, viz. that the Greeks and Romans did not ascribe them to a state of mind which we should characterize as in the full and genuine sense insane. Take, for instance, Seneca's Hercules Oetaeus (not Furens) or Virgil's Aeneis — both works will come before us in the next Chapter — and you will immediately discern that those respective poets did not intend to represent either the hero's or the heroine's self-conflagration as a result of actual Insanity, though they apply this latter term to it. Nay, Maximus Tyrius¹⁾ compares Hercules' exit, absurdly enough to be sure, with the death of Sokrates; and Dio Chrysostomos²⁾ lets Diogenes of Sinope describe and extol the said exit as a well-devised and most honorable conclusion of a manful and glorious career.

Proceeding, now, from the mythographers and poets to the various Greek philosophic schools, in their numerous disquisitions on suicide we find, as far as I can at this moment recollect, a sort of Insanity only thrice at some little length alluded to; each time, however, not by any means as a *frequent*, but only as a more or less *justifiable*, cause; and, moreover, as we shall presently discover, two of the said passages are somewhat obscure, and also the third seems more or less questionable.

Plato supposes³⁾ the case of a person possessed by some kind of stimulus (ὁίστρος) „neither human nor divine“, but rather daemónico-criminal in the shape of, for instance, a rage for pillaging Temples. By the by, sacrilege (ἱεροσυλία) was regarded by the ancient Greeks⁴⁾ as one of the intensest forms of irreverence, impiety, iniquity, because as an attack upon the Religion of the State, and was, therefore, visited with the forfeiture of life, property, and burial on native soil: which estimate, I may incidentally observe, passed over also into the christian church, whose early synods, when wishing to mark the enormity of other crimes, not unusually declared them equal to sacrilege, and for which, consequently, the severest punishments were inflicted.⁵⁾ Our philosopher, now, proposes and prescribes that his presumed victim (whether, however,

¹⁾ Diss. XVIII. ²⁾ Diogenes, or concerning Virtue, p. 169 of Wakefield's select orations of Dio Chrysostomos. Cf. also Diod. Sic. lib. IV, c. 38. ³⁾ Leves, lib. IX, init., vol. VII, p. 161 in Ast's edit. of Plato's collected works. ⁴⁾ Thus e. g. Plutarch, when speaking of Draco's laws, places sacrilegists and murderers side by side, vita Solonis, c. 17. ⁵⁾ Vide Stäudlin's Geschichte der Kirchenrecht Jesu, B. III, p. 403.

he here mean what we should usually term Insanity, the reader must be left to judge for himself) should apply every available philosophic, religious, social means to escape from the dominion of the irrational passion, harmful propensity, impious impulse; but, if those means should have proved inoperative or insufficient to liberate him, Plato deliberately advises him to commit self-destruction rather than succumb to that temptation to sin and enact that ill to which he feels himself, as it were, urged and driven (εἰ δὲ μὴ, καλλίω θάνατον σκεψάμενος ἀπαλλάττου τοῦ βίου). Plato's process of reasoning is evidently as follows (cf., however, what will be stated and developed in §. 25). Though, according to him, love of Self, man's „dearest friend“, bid him live, and not commit suicide, yet, if into this same Self a spirit-ill, irresistible and unconquerable, have insinuated itself, and, there nestling and entrenched, war against the *Community*, and menace the *Divine*, the *State* (NB. not God) steps in as that which is superior to the Self, and the result is: social life being pitched against individual life, the latter is bidden to sacrifice itself to the former, even through the instrumentality of suicide.

If not a more important and interesting, at all events a more doubtful and disputed, passage, the entire context of which will come before us in §. 32, occurs in the Neo Platonist Plotinus,¹⁾ which runs in the original thus: εἰ οὖν ἀρχὴν αἰθοῖτο τοῦ ληρῆιν; ἡ τάχα μὲν οὐ κατὰ σπουδαίον. εἰ δὲ καὶ γένοιτο, τάττοιτο ἂν ἐν τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις τοῦτο, καὶ ἐκ περιστάσεως (ob ea quae circumstant, on account of the attendant circumstances) αἰρετοῖς, οὐχ ἀπλῶς (simpliciter, for its own sake) αἰρετοῖς. — First of all, what is ληρῶ here intended to convey? I am unable to state with accuracy what graduated difference legitimately obtains in the various Greek terms for mental derangement, e. g. μανία, etc. etc.;²⁾ but, though every lexicographic authority pronounces λήρησις to indicate only such foolishness or imbecility as *old age* is likely to produce, and often does produce, the whole context forces us to assume that Plotinus is here speaking of a state which we must define as jarring with, or putting a stop to, the free activity of the soul and clear self-consciousness, consequently, of a sort of *dementia*, though neither of the *violent* kind, nor engendered by *criminal* indulgences. It is true, he in

¹⁾ Enn. I, lib. IX. ²⁾ Vide Papo's *Deutsche-Griech. Wörterb.* s. v. *Βεβήσαν.*

our passage affirms that the said λόγῳις „perhaps, will not, indeed, befall a virtuous man (σπουδαῖος); but, the entire passage would be objectless, if it could not occasionally do so; and, indeed, Plotinus elsewhere¹⁾ distinctly supposes the *possibility* of also the philosophic or good soul (man) becoming deranged, delirious, or mad, whichever word we may think proper to select; for also our modern languages are anything but exact in this matter. „But, what of pains and diseases and whatsoever in general hinders the energy of the mind?“ (viz. do they not hinder the εὖ ζῆν of the σπουδαῖος also?) εἰ δὲ δὴ μὴδ' αὐτῷ παρακαλοῦθαι; γένοιτο γὰρ ἂν, καὶ ἐκ φαρμάκων καὶ τινων νόσων. Here, however, we must pause for one moment over a mere historico-critical point. Ficinus read: εἰ δὲ μὴ δ' αὐτῷ παρακαλοῦθαι; and translated: „Quinetiam si per haec sibi minime constet, quid dicendum?“ Engelhardt²⁾ declared this passage entirely corrupted and utterly inexplicable to himself, proposed to amend it into εἰ δὲ μὴ δια τούτων παρακαλοῦθαι; i. e. suppose the soul to lose its intelligent power by the said pains and diseases; but he rejected his own conjectural emendation for philological reasons, though believing the context to require something similar in meaning. Thomas Taylor³⁾ had already translated: „besides, what is to be said, if the worthy man should be delirious or mad?“ And, finally, Creuser,⁴⁾ giving the reading I have above adopted „ex probatissimis libris“, as he says, proceeds to state its signification as follows: „si vero homo (vel animus) ne se ipse quidem adaequatur, h. e. si homo mente alienetur, si sibi ipse non amplius constet, et conturbetur mente“, and adds (assigning numerous authorities) „verbum Stoicis potissimum familiare.“ But to return to the passage from which we started. Likewise its remaining portions are somewhat obscurely and ambiguously worded, so that e. g. Macrobius and Olympiodorus (on whom vide Sect. I) managed to extract therefrom, each a completely opposite meaning.⁵⁾ The former says: „one must choose that which is necessary“ refers, probably, rather to the endurance of insanity as a something necessary than to violent disembodiment; whereas the latter says: „if any one feel approaching madness, he ought to choose death“,

¹⁾ Enn. I, lib. IV, c. 5. ²⁾ Die Gesammten des Plotinus, 1820, Bf. 1, p. 249.

³⁾ Five books of Plotinus, 1794, p. 21. ⁴⁾ Nota in vol. I, p. 63 of his celebrated edit. of the works of Plotinus. ⁵⁾ Vide the „argumentum“ which Marsilius Ficinus has prefixed to the ninth book of the first Ennead.

i. e. one must destroy one's self, ere one become mad; „which death, however, is then not desirable in and by itself, but only in this situation necessary“, i. e. because the insane person no longer lives as man, but only as animal, having no opportunity for perfectionation. — My own impression coincides essentially with Olympiodor's interpretation. I conceive Plotinus to convey that insanity implies a kind of *pro-suicidal* *αἴτιον*, a sort of divine admonition, or, at least, permission, to commit self-destruction (cf. the immediately following clause „unless it“, i. e. suicide; „be, as before said, necessary“, and the circumstances that Plotin immediately after the last *αἴτιον* speaks of poisons as not being the most beneficial means of suicide); the incipient sufferer is to have a certain liberty of choice between the commission and omission of suicide, and ought only to be warned against the application of poisons, if he determine on the former alternative, because they rob the soul of its consciousness. — In conclusion, let us observe that, whereas Plato laid the entire stress upon the possibility and probability of being injurious to society by doing harm to others and violating the laws, Plotin would seem to urge chiefly the incapacity for prosecuting one's own moral improvement.

A third passage occurs in Olympiodor's Commentary on Phaedon. For our present purpose (to the said Commentary itself we shall have to revert pretty often in chapt. I of the first Section), an extract which I find in Fabrotus,¹⁾ who has accompanied it by a Latin translation, is all we require. It runs Anglicè about thus. „The Stoics enumerated five cases of *legitimate* suicide. A banquet, they said, may be interrupted either by a sudden necessity, as the unexpected arrival of a friend, or, by the intrusion of inebriated persons who indulge in obscene language, or, by intoxication overcoming the guests, or, by the pernicious effects of the dishes served up, or, finally, by the provisions beginning to fail. In the same manner, one may put an end to one's life in five cases. 1. In a great necessity (here Menoeceus' case of self-devotion for his country is adduced). 2. When a tyrant would compel a person to divulge an arcanum (here the tale of the Pythagorean woman is given who bit off her tongue rather than state why she was not allowed to

¹⁾ Dissertatio de morte voluntaria, contained in Otto's Thesaurus juris Romani, 1727, T. III, p. 1167 sqq., init.

eat beans). 3. *One may kill one's self in consequence of madness, a purely bodily accident, inasmuch as madness is natural intoxication* (οὕτω καὶ τὴν βίον λύειν δεῖ διὰ τὸν παρεπόμενον τῷ σώματι λῆρον· φυσικὴ γάρ ἐστι μέθη ὁ λῆρος). 4. When the body is given up to incurable maladies which prevent it from serving as instrument to the soul. 5. On account of extreme poverty, if one can receive benefits only from the evil; for, their presents are impure, like themselves."

Here, then, we have ὁ λῆρος again, which Fabrotus has rendered by „animi delirium“, „deliratio“, not by e. g. dementia, insaniam, furor. However, I have not found in the earlier genuine Stoic writers this same legitimate cause for self-destruction mentioned at all, much less discussed and explained. Did not Olympiodor, perhaps, venture to carry a Plotinic dictum over into Stoicism, as he, doubtless, managed to twist Stoicism into Sokratism? — I may, however, incidentally mention that Arnold in his tediously discursive book states¹⁾ that the Stoics admit that a wise or worthy man might be affected διὰ μαλαγχολίαν ἢ λήρησιν, whilst affirming at the same time that he could never μαινέσθαι.

However, also the historians of Greece and Rome call for a moment's attention in respect of our present enquiry. But, here we may surely be brief, because without fear of contradiction from even moderately intelligent and dispassionate persons. Who, we simply ask, can dare to affirm that it ever occurred to any classical historian to represent the suicide of e. g. a Lucretia, a Demosthenes, a Themistokles, a Cato, a Brutus, a Porcia, or any other renowned man or woman as an effect of insanity? Nay, do they not, one and all, invariably exhibit the most celebrated cases of suicide among their respective fellow-countrymen or cotemporaries as not only co-existent with perfect sanity and consciousness, but as even emanating from the utmost deliberation and executed with coolest determination? Nor, indeed, is it far otherwise, when they have to deal with the phenomenon of a sort of wholesale suicidal performance. I will here merely remind the reader of what the elder Pliny narrates of the Quirites under Tarquinius (vide §. 35), and of what Plutarch and Aulus Gellius (vide ibidem) relate of the Milesian virgins; also Plutarch's recital of the inhabitants of the

¹⁾ Observations on Insanity, vide pp. 74, 106 of vol. I.

Lycian town of Xanthus is a case in point, and shall, therefore, here find a place. Whilst Marcus Brutus was besieging the city,¹⁾ a fire accidentally therein broke out which the Roman general was anxious speedily to quench. „But all at once the Lycians were seized with an extraordinary, incomprehensible inclination to despair which one may best liken to a furious eagerness for death.“ Plutarch, after having then detailed with how much energy and zeal the inhabitants of every station, age, and both sexes fanned the fire to spread it, warded off the enemy who endeavored to quench it, and scorned the entreaties of Brutus who wished them to preserve their lives and the town itself, winds up by assuring us that men, women and even little children sought to perish in every possible manner, some of the latter leaping amid hewling and screaming into the fire, others throwing themselves down from the walls, and others exposing their necks to the swords of their fathers, imploring the latter to slay them. „When — thus he concludes — the city was already nearly destroyed, one saw a woman suspended by a rope, whose dead child was hanging on her neck, and who was setting fire to her house with a burning torch.“ „Only, as the report goes, one hundred and fifty persons did not resist rescue.“ -- Something similar, he also says, their ancestors had done at the time of the Persian wars.²⁾

If we, finally, cast a glance at antique classical legislation, we find, it is true, in the Justinian Code (there is no allusion whatsoever in the extant fragments of Greek laws) mention made of „*furor*“ and „*insania*“ as possible causes of, or reasons for, self-destruction. The chief passage of this kind (another we shall quote in §. 35) is; doubtless, the following one.³⁾ „*Eorum demum bona fisco vindicantur, qui conscientia delati, admissique criminis, metuque futurae sententiae, manus sibi intulerunt. Esprepter fratrem, vel patrem tuum, si nullo delato crimine, dolore aliquo corporis, aut taedio vitae, aut furore, aut insania, aut aliquo casu suspendio vitam finisse constiterit, bona eorum, tam ex testamento, quam ab intestato ad successores pertinebunt.*“ We, therefore, see

¹⁾ Life of Marcus Brutus, c. 31. ²⁾ Vide Herod. I, c. 276. The narrative here refers to the Lycians in their unequal struggle against Harpagus. The men, however, after having set fire to the fortress into which they had conveyed their wives, children and slaves, themselves died fighting. ³⁾ Codex, lib. IX, tit. 50, constit. 1. It is a law of Antoninus.

that, since physical and psychical pains, debts and even elsewhere (vide §. 35) vanity (jactatio) are mentioned beside furor and insania as equally possible and equally justifiable suicidal causes, the corpus juris civilis cannot by any means be imagined to have intended to designate the two latter as *specifically justifying* ones; nay, since it mentions far more often dolor, taedium, pudor aeris alleni etc. than it does furor and insania, we see ourselves warranted in assuming that the Pagan Roman Jurisconsults and Imperators believed the two latter to be *far less frequent* than any one of the previously adduced causes. Moreover, if I mistake not, the terms furor and insania must not in *this context* be interpreted into aught like a stringently and scientifically medical meaning; for, lawyers as rarely take heed to the strict definitions of medicine as physicians attend to the nice distinctions of jurisprudence. However, I am well aware that in the corpus juris civilis the term furor more especially is really employed of that state which removes all moral responsibility even in cases of murder, except if committed in *lucid intervals*.

II. During the Christian Middle Ages.

In the mediaeval times of Christendom, however, upon which we must now enter, the supposition of a direct nexus between insanity and suicide was very frequently promulgated and pretty universally believed. But, the entire character and complexion which our question then assumed, are completely different, theological, theosophico-speculative, ecclesiastico-dogmatical, and, if you like, ridiculously superstitious. This is, however, anticipating.

The early church-fathers, as we shall learn on a later occasion, took for granted that self-slaughter was a startlingly irreligious action, and well they might do so, and, inasmuch as they referred all sin as such to the Evil Spirit, one cannot wonder at all, if they deduced so momentous an act as suicide in a direct manner from the Devil's special influence and instigation. Perhaps, Augustin's pointed reference to one of the items of Jesus's Temptation in the Wilderness (vide what will be said on this matter in §. 63) may have helped somewhat in this direction. This, however, is only one side of the question. Another side is as follows. Howsoever much of super-earthly or rather subter-earthly mysteriousness the early Christians might seek and see in the peculiar phenomenon of the so-called Demoniacs of the New Testament, they could, if they

examined at all into some of the cases stated, scarcely help regarding the said Possessed as persons who labored under a species of disease or affliction closely allied to phrensy or madness, and, at the same time, from their standing-point, pronouncing such phrensy or madness specifically Satan-wrought. Inasmuch, moreover, as many of the demoniaci, whose cases are recorded in the New Testament, manifest a sort of deep melancholy and despondency, and even use a kind of destructive violence against their own bodies, the conclusion lay, as it seems to me, pretty near: that despair and self-destruction are in general one of the effects of a species of Devil-inflicted insanity. Nay, even the well-known circumstance recorded of the swine of the Gergesenes committing a sort of suicide might largely contribute to induce mystically and credulously inclined minds to assume that suicide, the more ungodly and unnatural it was in itself, was all the more likely to be a consequence of special Satanic agency, destroying the mind first and afterwards the body too, and, of course, thus bringing about final spiritual perdition. I will, however, enter into some few particulars by way of illustrating my meaning.

Every Christian is familiar with the primary source of that entire doctrine of *daemonomania* to which allusion has just been made, and at once recalls to mind that theory of the so-called Fall of Man which Moses, or some other ancient Hebrew Sage, thought out and wrote down, from a desire to account for what is as indubitable as it is mournful, the inclination of the human heart and will to Evil and Unwisdom, and the vast extent of Sin and Suffering on this fair earth. Even as a Traveller, when he beholds a broad, mighty stream rushing along and doing destructive work, experiences within himself a natural and laudable curiosity to trace out its source, though it should lose itself into trackless desert or pathless glacier: so the reasoning human mind may well be pardoned for endeavoring to search out the origin of what unquestionably exists in the moral world, and has ever manifested and developed itself as the ages of human story have rolled on. But, though yon traveller with his five sound senses and with courage, perseverance, sagacity may ultimately surmount all difficulties and arrive at indisputable certainty, the enquiring mind of man never will and never can, despite all its guessing and trying, learning and proving, solve the everlasting problem of the „origin of evil.“ Wiser or better

intelligence than is afforded in the Genesis has, perchance, after all never been supplied; but, nevertheless, all even there is „thohu wabohu“ still, a chaotic darkness and confusion to which yon „let there be light“ in no discernible measure applies. It seems to me immaterial, or at least of mightily little consequence, whether we understand the Mosaic record *literally*, as most of the ancient Theologians (Origenes, however, e. g. not) did, or interpret it *allegorically*, as most of the modern Philosophers (not, however, our so-called „sound divines“ in whom „dulness is sacred“) do, unless either construction could be proved a *divine* solution of the problem at issue, and therefore accepted as *infallible* authority. But, I pray you, contemplate the matter calmly and deeply, and then honestly and frankly answer me this question: hast thou got the requisite „where to stand“, and do all those *tremendous inferences*, which ecclesiastical orthodoxy has by ingenuity or violence drawn therefrom, set thy mind and heart at rest? — Aye, it is quite marvellous what feats of logic some of those whose motto is „crede, ut intelligas“ can perform, and how they exult, when they have traced their lines of argumentation on paper, fancying that they have fully mastered the difficulty at last. Thus, for instance, Heinroth with his equally speculative and orthodox reasonings on our subject in his work „*Ueber die Wahrheit*.“ But, from me such fairy visions have long since vanished, and into their stead there has now come darkness, only darkness, deepest darkness.

It lies in the nature of all traditional Religions, as well as of all so-called Mythologies, to shape fictitious forms, to create poetic similes, whereby the minds of mortals become entrapped and enchanted, gradually reconciling themselves to accept ingenious human inventions as sacred and divine, and at last accustoming themselves to regard theorems as credible in the measure in which they are unintelligible. Thus all ancient Eastern peoples with whom the Hebrews came into contact and by whom they were more or less influenced, e. g. the Egyptians, the Persians, had as a prominent figure in their respective systems a *Personal Devil*; and e. g. Typhon, Ahriman are, in various aspects, prototypes of, or pendants to, the Satan of the Old Testament, i. e. each is in his own peculiar manner and measure conceived and represented as the author of evil, the tempter to ill, the enemy to light and love, the source of physical and psychical disease, of despair, destruction, and death. And

what was only occasionally hinted at, or incidentally put forward, in the writings of the Old Testament, Jesus and his Apostles (not by any means, I presume, from mere accommodation to the Jewish notions of their contemporaries, but rather from sincere personal belief) laid much greater stress upon and developed much more fully, as nobody can doubt who studies the gospels and epistles of the N. T. with an unprejudiced mind. And in that same belief root all the narratives above alluded to concerning the so-called „Possessed.“ It is not an easy task, despite our own Hugh Farmer's once famous and still interesting „Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament“, and dozens of other later tracts on the same topic, to comprehend very clearly and with certainty what exactly the writers of the N. T. understand by δαίμων, δαίμονες, δαιμονιον, δαιμονια, which terms we generally render right out by „Devil“ or „Devils“ (indeed, in English the word demon itself has foolishly come to be used synonymously with devil or fiend); but it is perfectly clear and certain that they assumed a δαιμονιον to be a *Spirit-Power* of some kind, a *supernatural agency* in and over man, and for *evil* purposes only, so that what is represented in the N. T. as Daemonic is invariably *kakodaemonic*,¹⁾ not *eudaemonic* (agathodaemonic); and, moreover, it is pretty manifest that very many of such mental and physical, whether separately or connectively, visitations and sufferings as could not be accounted for according to the then standard of psychology and physiology, or removed by the then methods of therapy and surgery, were forthwith ascribed to Daemonic influences. And, finally, if the immediate followers of Jesus Messiah took for granted, as e. g. Matthew assures us (ch. VIII, 16, 17) that „healing all that were sick, and casting out the spirits with his word“ was a necessary fulfilment!! of the O. T. Messianic prophecy „He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses“, we cannot marvel at the part assigned to Jesus in relation to the so-called Possessed.

Brief though all the narratives of this description in the Synoptic Gospels be, and though they be one and all, in spite of or in consequence of their brevity, beset, as it seems to me, with mythical adjuncts and superstitious exaggerations, sometimes bordering

¹⁾ i. e. the spirit is an „impure“ or „unclean“, i. e. diabolical one, cf. e. g. Luke VIII, 29.

even on the utterly impossible; yet, is it not evident from what is told (vide Matth. VIII, 28, and Mark V, 4, 5) of some of the victims, e. g. that they were fond of solitude, that they frequented dismal localities, that they were fierce, bound with fetters, attempted self-mutilation, ¹⁾ — is it, I say, not evident that they were what we should in modern parlance call *monomaniacs* or *lunatics*, i. e. either harmlessly melancholy or dangerously mad? Nay, the New Testament idiom itself (not to say anything about fully authenticated cognate idioms in both the Semitic and Classical languages) imperceptibly leads us on to some such inference; for e. g. in Mark V, 15 we find *καρποφοῦντα* placed in opposition to *δαίμονιζουσαν*, and in John X, 20 *μυθεῖται* is put as an express consequence of *δαίμονιον ἔχειν*.

Nevertheless, I feel firmly persuaded that, as the gospel-historians saw something supra-mundane in the possessions themselves, they meant to represent the dispossessions also as something supernaturalistic. Be it so. But, unless I could discern something more than mere anomaly, unsoundness, disorganization in such mildest and severest shapes as psychical and physical disease also now-a-days assumes, I for one should be unwilling to admit in the instances before us aught like what in all dark ages and among all rude peoples has borne and still bears the name of Exorcism; indeed, aught else but what keen-sightedness, tenderness, devoutness, philanthropy might effect and often does effect in non-miraculous manner by acting on the *faith*, or fixed ideas, of the sufferer in some more or less peculiar and isolated cases.

Proceeding in our task, we suggest that it is not by any means remarkable, if the early and the later mediaeval christian church frequently brought suicide, as the culminating point of despair and violence, into immediate connexion with the species of *Diabolocrasy* now under debate. To be silent on the general tenet that Satan was represented as having brought Sin and Death into the world, of having been the murderer and destroyer from the beginning, does he not appear already in the O. T. as reducing Job to the very verge of suicidal despair? (vide, however, §. 49). Is he not stated to have entered Judas who soon afterwards literally hanged himself? (vide §. 64). Nay, are not even dumb animals represented (Matth. VIII,

¹⁾ In reference to this last particular the reader might compare what Herodotus (lib. VI. c. 75 and c. 84) narrates of the gradual self-mutilation and ultimate self-slaughter of the insane Lacedaemonian ruler, Kleomenes I.

82 ff.) as having committed immediately a sort of self-destruction, after Daimones had gone into them, though this same occurrence be about as clear as that in classic story concerning the sphinx which precipitated itself from the rock into the sea, after its riddle had been guessed? — What, however, happened in the time of Jesus might, for any sensible reason that can be assigned to the contrary, happen just as well in later centuries: ergo, Satan might continue to be regarded as a tempter to, and worker of, suicide. Consequently, we cannot wonder at finding throughout the middle ages suicides frequently characterized as *Daemoniaci*, and suicide defined as a fruit of *Daemonic* possession, vexation, instigation, even though generally nothing more than ordinary *taedium vitae*, melancholy, remorse, or desperation should have been the real cause, if we consider the individual instances recorded in a less credulous and a more practical light. But, we will illustrate and demonstrate this matter somewhat.

In the Homilies which are generally ascribed to the Apostolic Father, Clemens Romanus, in the 1st cent. p. C., but which probably belong to some christian author in the 3rd century, we read to this effect.¹⁾ „They (the evil Spirits) destroy you in a secret manner, in order that you may not perceive their intention. As if it happened from misfortune or distress, from love, anger or grief, they induce you to hang or drown yourselves, hurl you from a precipice and put an end to your lives by suicide, apoplexy, or some other disease.“ According to the same writer (*vide ibid.* pp. 82, 85, 86), Minucius Felix, in the 3rd cent. p. C., in ch. 27 of his *Octavius*, affirms that „the Daemons also secretly creep as subtle Spirits into the bodies of human beings, cause diseases, render insane, distort the limbs, in order to impel to their worship“, etc. Also (*vide p. 119 of §. 70 of our Treatise*) the churchfather Chrysostomos informs us in express words that the Devil had led many people to hurl themselves down precipices and into ditches. Furthermore, Cassianus, that celebrated and influential monastic teacher in the 5th cent. to whom we alluded in §. 11, circumstantially narrates²⁾ of a certain hermit, Hero by name, who at that time dwelt

¹⁾ Hom. 11, cap. 15, as quoted by Lützelberger on pp. 80, 81 of his *essay die Lehren der Bibel und der ältesten christlichen Kirche über Satan und sein Reich, Athenäum für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Leben*, 1839, erstes Heft. ²⁾ *Collationes patrum*, coll. II, c. 5: de morte Heronis senis.

in one of the Egyptian deserts, what is in substance about thus. During fifty years, he had led a particularly austere life, evincing a wonderful love of solitude, exercising himself daily in privations and fastings, and not abating from his rigor even on holy festivals. At length, however, such overwrought zeal of his filled him with presumption and he actually flung himself one day most deliberately and confidently into a deep well, the Devil who had transformed himself into an Angel of Light having commanded him to do so, suggesting to him that, in case he should not be hurt by the experiment, so miraculous an event would set the seal upon the great merits of his virtue. The brethren did not succeed in extracting him without considerable trouble, and he soon afterwards expired in consequence of the injuries he had sustained, but obstinately persisting to the last in believing that he had not exactly been deceived and misled by the malicious cunning of the Devil. However, the Abbot Paphnutius hesitated for some time, whether he should regard and treat him, in the matter of burial, as a veritable suicide or not, but at last decided upon not numbering him among the veritable Biathanatoi (vide p. 254 of §. 77). Indeed, in the middle ages there would appear to have existed a pretty universal belief in a so-called Daemon Meridianus s. daemonium meridianum,¹⁾ termed in the German of that age mittetägigin tiefel,²⁾ which word originated from a passage in the Old Testament at which we will now look for a moment. „Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; *nor for the devastation that wasteth at noon-day.*“ Thus in vv. 5, 6 of Psalm 91, when a description is being given of all the spiritual and physical ills from which the godly shall be protected; and the underlined words are rendered by the LXX (somewhat differently, however, by Aquila and by Symmachus) ἀπὸ συμπτώματος, καὶ δαμονίου μεσημβρινοῦ — and likewise the Vulg. has „ab incurso, et daemonio meridiano.“ In the first place, now, one need not deny that it was an Old Testament conception or phraseology that „evil angels“ (cf. Psalm 78, 49, where the God-sent plagues among the Egyptians are being detailed) were instruments of Jehovah's wrath and man's troubles; and, in the

¹⁾ Vide Du Cange, Glossarium s. v. Daemon. ²⁾ Cf. Graff, *Altdeutscher Sprachschatz*, 1840, 25. V, p. 359.

second place, it is perfectly certain that the LXX and the Vulg. employ the term *δαμόνια*, *daemonia* of Pagan Idols in contradistinction to the true God, as translation of the Hebrew word *דְּמוֹן*¹⁾ (vide Deut. 32, 17, and Psalm 106, 37: *דְּמוֹן*), LXX. *τοῖς δαίμοσι*; Vulg. *daemonibus*; our authorized version: *to the Devils*). But in the third place, whatever may have induced the Septuaginta to render in Psalm 91, 6 the Hebrew *דְּמוֹן* (*דְּמוֹן*) *יָשׁוּב* (*יָשׁוּב*) (the enclosed words are those which Clericus in his *Commentarii* supplies to fill up the ellipsis, and, though they may not be necessary, they certainly tend to facilitate the construction) as above, philological as well as contextual reasons must, I ween, convince us that the expressions at issue in the original refer simply and solely to natural external injurious influences, and most probably to the scorching heat and sultry winds of the meridian sun in an Eastern clime with their immediate or mediate effects upon the human physical frame.²⁾

Nevertheless, according to Du Cange *ubi supra*, sundry early christian writers not only defined that depression of spirits, *acedia* (vide §. 73 of our Treatise), which often led to suicide, as the *Daemon meridianus*, but also literally ascribed actual suicide to his influence. „Evagrius (*de octo cogitationibus*) ait, ἀκηδία εὖν εἶναι δαίμονα, ὃς μεσημβρινὸς καλεῖται, τῶν δαιμόνων βαρύτερον Pachymeres (*lib. II, c. 8*), speaking of a certain person who, driven by despair, had hanged himself: καὶ μεσημβρινὸν ἐκείνου δαιμόνιον τι επικηδῶν καὶ ἐπ' οἰκίας ἀψάμενος βρόχον, διαπεφώνηκε.

Thence, too, as we shall see circumstantially in §. 77 of this Treatise, very many of the anti-suicidal laws of the mediaeval church introduce our topic with a „*si homo vexatus est a diabolo*“, „*aliqua diaboli instigatione*“, etc., where it might be somewhat hazardous to endeavor to discriminate nicely between the more or less of actual diablerie to which a „*vexatus*“ or an „*instigatus*“ had fallen a victim, though, in all probability, the former was supposed to be more intensely visitated (i. e. more thoroughly phrenitic) than the latter.

„Phrenitic“, we said advisedly; for, no doubt, both in the primitive and in the middle christian ages Asceticism and Mysticism often brooded out of „*tristitia*“, „*acedia*“, „*desperatio*“ *real insanity* which in its turn and season literally gave birth to suicide, since

¹⁾ Cf. Roediger in his continuation of Gesenius' *Thesaurus s. rad.* *דְּמוֹן*, p. 1375. ²⁾ Cf. Psalm 121, 6 as a parallel passage.

„death, only death, can break the lasting chain.“ — If ancient classical Mythology had conceived its Divinities so humanly carnal that genuinely religious and loftily moral effluences could scarcely be derived from them, and they could almost only be converted to poetic and plastic uses, like unto Beings physically beautiful and passionately affected: the God-Christ of yon mystic and scholastic Theology was, on the contrary, so inhumanly spiritual, if I may thus express myself, that his true worshippers were supposed to be called upon to sacrifice the Flesh to him by every imaginable and outrageous process of voluntary violence to Nature herself, by unrelieved solitude and prolonged meditations, continuous prayers and ridiculous penances not only, but also by torturing fastings (because Jesus had once fasted 40 days and 40 nights!), and by brutish flagellations (because Jesus had been scourged, and Paul had (1 Cor. IX, 27) incidentally confessed that he himself kept his body under subjection!). But, such a God was — pardon the bold word — verily! himself a species of cruel Monk or crafty Fiend, and not by any means the veritable Godhead who had fashioned man into Flesh and Spirit, not into Spirit only, and had bid him go forth into battle against the actual world, — facing, braving, fighting down, its impurities and confusions, — and not merely brood and lament, — merely fleeing into cloisterly retirement and selfishly endeavoring to save his own soul by attempted *hyper*-spiritualism. — No doubt, then, such flight and attempt oftentimes did engender, with a kind of inward God-given necessity, spectral hallucinations and ghastly unsoundnesses, something like what we should now term religious insanity, the most subtle as well as the most painful form which insanity can take. Therefore, if e. g. Paphnutius adjudged that Hero was mad, i. e. an irresponsible suicide, he was right enough, I ween, and in all similar instances the clerical and baronial mediaeval law-makers would have acted wisely by omitting, though they were sometimes very far from doing so, the infliction of any ritual and fiscal punishment, if suicide occurred as the finale, since suchlike phrenetic cause may fitly be said not only to lessen, but to remove entirely from the sufferer, the *guilt* of any *final* individual deed: the guilt lay in that system and previous process which had led on to the said deed.

Moreover, if, as we have said, such religious madness bore a very close relation to the Nemesis of Nature herself, it surely need

not have stood in any very traceable or definable immediate connexion with the Devil. But, there was in those same ages an ecclesiastico-theological system to be upheld, and its mystico-speculative tenets seemed to tend depthwards, and the multitude was ever fond of a species of ghostly dizziness which naturally arises from glancing a while into „the depths of Satan“; and even the sacerdotal buffooneries and *human devilries* that were carried on under the name of „Proceedings against Witchcraft“ found favor in the sight of many, though no rational christian can now-a-days so much as read of them without feeling deeply ashamed and agonized that such fatuities and monstrosities ever occupied a place in the lap of civilization and christendom. The belief in the Evil One must needs be kept up, no matter, whether such belief helped or hindered human warfare against existent Evil: which same warfare, however, would seem to me an infinitely more important, noble and sacred task than the upholding of any dogmatico-ecclesiastic doctrine whatsoever, and much more likely to be waged wisely and successfully, if we rid ourselves of all speculations about a Personal Devil as tempter to sorrow and suicide, and rather take heed to the very clear and simple words of the Apostle James (ch. I, 14, 15). „Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*.“

But, we dare not, despite the above admissions, overlook or forget two very tangible facts. Firstly. Nothing can be more confused or confusing than most of what is represented to us in the middle ages under the name of Insanity in general. Indeed, from our modern standing-point we should often feel tempted to consider rather much of that as being of the nature and effect of insanity which is put forth as most wise and holy (e. g. the homage done to men as successors to Peter and vicars of Christ who were fitter for the galleys or the gallows, or the firm belief in Transsubstantiation, and the value attached to Saintships) than much of what is represented as characteristics and evidences of insanity.¹⁾ And, secondly, there occur also in the middle ages not a few cases of suicide on the part of christians with which insanity, properly so

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. the few extracts from laws given in the far too brief § on *Wahnsinn* in Wilda's *Geschichte des Germanischen Rechts*, Band I.

called, had, beyond all dispute, nothing very particular to do, inasmuch as quite ordinary and explicable motives for the deed existed, and can be assigned.¹⁾

III. Since the Reformation.

Luther, as we know, did not like the sound sense and plain morality which characterize that New Testament epistle from which I above made a quotation. It seemed to him to clash with several of his favorite doctrines, and, therefore, appeared to him²⁾ quite unworthy of a place among the records of divine revelation, not the work of Saint James, but rather of some well-meaning, obscure person, not of apostolic spirit and sort, but a mere „letter of straw“ (eine rechte strohernes Epistel). But this heroic Reformer was, methinks, wrong in this matter, as in many others. The spirit of the age still held him captive in more particulars than one, though at the same time no little of what was noblest and manliest and wisest in his age and among his own people had erected its tabernacle in his truly great soul so that he could Moses-like deliver his nation out of the house of sacerdotal bondage, though he might not be able to conduct them into the promised land of perfect mental liberty which, indeed, they, and all of us, have still to travel towards and to fight for. He himself at various periods of his tried, checquered, momentous life suffered from downcastness, melancholy, hallucinations, temptations which he called his „thorn in the flesh“, „the buffetings of Satan“, and which he invariably and emphatically proclaimed to be direct influences of the Devil. We, however, nowhere learn that he himself ever felt at all inclined to self-destruction; but we on more than one occasion learn that he without hesitation referred self-destruction in general to the efficacy of a Personal Devil. Here some significant passages of this description.³⁾ „Denn der Teufel, weil er nicht allein ein Lügner, sondern auch ein Todtschläger ist, ohn

¹⁾ This is not the place to specify any of them. Vide, therefore, §. 73 of this Treatise. Here, en passant, I will allude merely to e. g. pp. 67, 109 of Loebell's *Gregor von Tours und seine Zeit*, vornehmlich aus seinen Werken gesammelt, 1839, where lib. V, 33 and lib. III, 33 of Gregory's well-known important historical work are referred to. ²⁾ Vide his treatise *Büchlein von der Babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche*, Werke, edid. Walch, Th. XIX, p. 142, and his various Prefaces to his version of this epistle, *ibid.* Th. XII, p. 769, and Th. XIV, pp. 105, 148. ³⁾ The two first occur in his *großer Catechismus*, composed in the year 1529, in his exposition of the words „lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil“ of the Lord's Prayer. Werke, edid. Walch, Th. I, pp. 146—149.

Unterlaß auch nach unserm Leben trachtet, und sein Mithlein thut, wo er uns zu Unfall und Schaden am Leib bringen kann. Daher kömmt, daß er manchem den Hals bricht oder von Sinnen bringet, etliche im Wasser ersäuft, und viel dahin treibt; daß sie sich selbst umbringen, und zu viel andern schrecklichen Fällen. Darum haben wir auf Erden nichts zu thun, denn ohn Unterlaß wider diesen Hauptfeind zu bitten. Denn wo uns Gott nicht ertheile, wären wir keine Stunde vor ihm sicher.“ „Dazu kömmt nun der Teufel, heyt und bläset auch allenthalben zu. Aber sonderlich treibt er, was das Gewissen und getheilte Sachen betrifft, nemlich, daß man beyde Gottes Wort und Werke, in Blind schlage und verachte, daß er uns vom Glauben, Hoffnung und Liebe reiße, und bringe zu Mißglauben, falscher Vermessenheit und Verstockung; oder wiederum, zur Verzweiflung, Gottesverläugnung und Absterung, und andern unzähligen greulichen Stücken. Das sind nun Strick und Rehe, ja die rechten feurigen Pfeile, die nicht Fleisch und Blut, sondern der Teufel auß aller giftigste ins Herze schießet.“ „It is very certain that, as to all persons who have hanged themselves, or killed themselves in any other way, 'tis the Devil who has put the cord round their necks, or the knife to their throats.“ 'Tis a fearful thing when Satan torments the sorrowful conscience with melancholy; then the wicked villain, master-like, disguises himself in the person of Christ, so that it is impossible for a poor creature, whose conscience is troubled, to discover the khavery. Hence many of those, that neither know nor understand the same, run headlong into despair, and make away with themselves; for they are fully persuaded it is not the Devil, but Christ himself; that thus vexes and torments them.“¹⁾ Remarkable, too, in this respect are the words which Luther once addressed to Melancthon, when the latter was extremely dejected and ill.²⁾ „Geyß getrost, Philippe, Ihr werdet nicht sterben! Obgleich Gott Ursache hat zu tödten, so will er doch nicht den Tod des Sünders, sondern daß er sich bekehre und lebe. Er wird Euch, Philippe, nicht verstoßen oder zugeben, daß Ihr in Eurer Sünde und Schwermuth vergehet. Darum gebt dem Trauergeist nicht Raum und werdet nicht Euer eigener Mörder, sondern verlaßt Euch auf den Herrn, der da kann tödten und lebendig machen.“

¹⁾ Table-Talk, pp. 254, 262 of Hazlitt's translation. A part of this sounds almost like an echo of Hero's story. ²⁾ Vide p. 824 of Pfiffer's most excellent work Martin Luther's Leben, 1836. Cf. ibid. also pp. 311, 888, 889, 891, 898, 899.

Thus it is perfectly clear, that it belonged to Luther's entire view of the world and of Life, to ascribe to the Devil every species of mental, and even physical, disease, and more especially all spiritual conflicts and criminal temptations, so that we need not be in the least astonished, if he considered, e. g., suicide an offspring of Devil-wrought insanity. And indeed, perchance, a pretty goodly number of orthodox clergymen among ourselves in the present time appear — not that they really have Luther's stout faith, but they find it convenient to indulge in kindred phraseology, as, indeed, in general not a little of what they utter is mere phrase with them — to countenance a similar view of Satanic potency and away in this nether world of ours, as far as homicide and suchlike is concerned. Thence, for instance, Trench in a recent beautiful little work of his *applauds* ¹⁾ the mediaeval insertion of „*instigante diabolo*“ into all indictments for murder, because *then* „men were not ashamed of tracing evil to his, i. e. the Devil's, inspiration“, and all „guilt“ or „guile“ is = „being beguiled by the Devil.“ For my own part, such teaching does not appear to me to lead to much; yet it is certainly a degree better than when not a few of our most popular evangelical preachers, like e. g. Messrs. Mc. Neile and Dibdin, occasionally treat their respective patient audiences to such egregious sillinesses about the necessary and evident nexus between Clairvoyance, Table Rapping etc. and the Arch Spirit of evil as may well justify us in wishing that they would but think and read more in their Studies and — talk less nonsense in their Pulpits. Upon the whole, I have marvellously small sympathy with that „*Diabolus Redivivus*“ business, which is now-a-days being carried on e. g. in that German State, of which Luther himself was a subject, and cannot help surmising that the ultramontane or pietistic movers therein would themselves sometimes take fright, if their somewhat nebulous premises were to be pushed to such extreme consequences as perfectly legitimate inferences would, doubtless, sanction. — Therefore, quitting this mystico-theological terrain about Diablocracy, and sincerely wishing that our well so-called „Bodies of Divinity“ may the sooner the better die, rot, and be put out of human sight, if no *mind* or *soul* be any longer in them, we gladly pass on to notice *other*, more intelligible and enlightened, modern modes of stipulating for a relation between suicide and insanity.

¹⁾ Lectures on the study of words, p. 122.

Not a small number of very celebrated philosophical, medical and juridical writers have, in more or less direct and emphatic language, proclaimed their belief that suicide in general is in and by itself an evidence of what one might incline to comprehend under the term Insanity (*Derangement*, *Lunacy*). Here with utmost succinctness the salient points in the utterances of some few of such chief testimonies to the said effect as my readings have placed in my way. Kant in one of his more or less medical minor Essays says¹⁾ that „the resolution of the suicide is the effect eines bloß zum *Wahnsinn* eralteten Affekts.“ Osiander, a very renowned German Professor of Medicine, says²⁾ in his purely medical monograph on our topic that „to become a suicide one must first renounce sound Reason, and be in the proper sense of the term *verrückt*.“ Falret, a celebrated French physician, says³⁾ in his chiefly also medical work on our theme that, generally speaking, „suicide is self-love bordering on insanity“, and that „to kill one's self is to resemble a lunatic who plunges a dagger into the breast of his mother whom he adores.“ And Gall, the ingenious Father of Phrenology, at some little length acquaints us⁴⁾, in that book which he styles the only true representation of his peculiar tenets, with the fact that his examinations of the brain of numerous suicides had certified to him that „every premeditated case of suicide was produced by a species of *Wahnsinn*, and had its cause in a diseased state of the brain, the entire brain, or individual portions of it, disappearing, and the bones of the skull getting thick in the sunken locality“, etc.

Most frequently, however, as well as most positively Continental writers have maintained that suicide among the English is attributable to mental disease; and Montesquieu may be pronounced foremost, if not in time, yet in fame, among such writers: wherefore I will take the liberty of quoting his own words⁵⁾ in their entire context. „Nous ne voyons point dans les histoires, que les Romains se fissent mourir

¹⁾ Von der Macht des Gemüths durch den bloßen Voratz, seiner krankhaften Gefühle Meister zu seyn, 1797, p. 395 of B. III. of his vermischte Schriften in the edit. 1799. ²⁾ Ueber den Selbstmord, seine Ursachen, Arten, medicinsch-gerichtliche Untersuchung und Mittel gegen denselben, 1813, p. 11. ³⁾ Der Selbstmord. Eine Abhandlung über die physischen und psychologischen Ursachen desselben, und über die Mittel, seine Fortschritte zu hemmen, übersetzt von G. Wendt, 1824, pp. 2, 118. ⁴⁾ Meine Reise durch Deutschland, nebst pathognomischen Bemerkungen über meine gemachten Bekanntschaften, und einzig wahre Darstellung meiner Lehre, 1806, pp. 164—169, and cf. also p. 303. ⁵⁾ *Esprit des lois*, liv. XIV, ch. 12.

sans sujet: mais les Anglois se tuent sans qu'on puisse imaginer aucune raison qui les y détermine, ils se tuent dans le sein même du bonheur. Cette action, chez les Romains étoit : chez les Anglois, elle est l'effet d'une maladie. Il y a apparence que c'est un défaut de filtration du suc nerveux; la machine, dont les forces motrices se trouvent à tout moment sans action, est lasse d'elle-même; l'ame ne sent point de douleur, mais une certaine difficulté de l'existence. La douleur est un mal local, qui nous porte au desir de voir cesser cette douleur: le poids de la vie est un mal qui n'a point de lieu particulier, et qui nous porte au desir de voir finir cette vie. Il est clair que les lois civiles de quelques pays ont eu des raisons pour flétrir l'homicide de soi-même; mais en Angleterre on ne peut plus le punir qu'on ne punit les effets de la *démence*. Formey (as quoted in §. 3) says somewhat similarly. „Le Meurtre volontaire est chez les Anglois une véritable maladie, dont ils meurent à mon avis, comme d'autres mourroient d'une maladie ordinaire. Il faut bien que cela soit ainsi, puisque non seulement le climat, mais les saisons mêmes influent sur ces actions. Ainsi ce ne sont pas des raisons qu'il faut alléguer aux Anglois; le *Médecin* leur est plus nécessaire que le *Philosophe*.“ Holbach, finally, in the work we shall discuss on pp. 203—207 of §. 74, utters briefly what follows. „En Angleterre les suicides sont qualifiés de *Lunatiques*; par conséquence, leur maladie ne paroît plus blamable que le *transport au cerveau*.“

Which last testimony must needs direct our attention at once to the opinions prevalent among ourselves, as far as they are testified to by our Coroner's Inquests. Therefore, leaving, for the present at all events, aside what English philosophical, medical or juridical writers may have advanced on the matter, we will forthwith fasten upon the indisputable circumstance that upon the said Inquests it is declared, according to evidence and on oath, that two thirds or four fifths or nineteen twentieths — take the last proportion as nearest the truth — of the cases of self-destruction which come before the Coroners and their Jurymen are ascribable to acute or temporary Insanity, or by whatsoever other name those gentlemen may choose to call what they mean, if they can be fairly presumed to mean anything at all, or to know themselves what they exactly do mean.

I have already in the preliminary § of this Chapter disclaimed the possession of all physiological attainments, and therefore shall

not attempt to argue from a medical or anatomical standing-point the various passages I have just now quoted. Though, however, the reader shall be left to think of what is argumentative or declamatory, scientific or accommodatory in the one or the other of them as he may like best, I will and must pause to reflect and comment on their contents and purport in a simple, sober, *unprofessional* manner, since my historical task demands that I should do so.

No doubt at all, in modern times insanity has been the longer the more on the increase, as suicide itself has too (vide the details in §. 75), and insanity is often the cause of suicide, suicide an effect of insanity. With the cause of the cause, however, we are here not immediately concerned. It is self-evident, and sufficient for us to know, that insanity may be either chronic or acute, either congenital or superinduced, brought on either by self-incurred guilt or by accidental occurrences, either by some sudden internal shock or external injury, either by religious excitement or worldly vicissitudes, etc. etc. This much having been in general granted, we now proceed to make the following series of observations.

I have embraced the opportunity of familiarizing myself with the results of the necrologies of some few of the principal European public lunatic asylums, and have been forcibly struck with this circumstance: *there*, where *veritably* insane persons are ordinarily placed, suicide is not by any means a very common occurrence; and I have reason to conclude that it would not be a much more frequent recurrence than it really is, even if the inmates of such establishments were less constantly watched and guarded, less carefully attended and administered to than we must, in the nature of things, suppose them to be.

If we reflect some little on the peculiarities of the physical organization and social position of females, on their entire inward and outward life, we can easily divine why — as the catalogues of the inmates of Bedlam or Hanwell, Charenton or the Salpêtrière sufficiently show — they should be much more subject to *mental aberrations* than men; and, nevertheless, according to every computation — and several have lain before me for examination — I have fallen in with, suicide is far less frequent among them than among males, say as 1 to 3, or in some similar proportion.

More especially in our own days, suicide is anything but exactly unusual even among comparative children, mere schoolboys, school-

girls, apprentices from 9 to 16 years of age, in whom both the physical and mental powers have still, according to all appearances, remained *perfectly intact*, and whose death-deed is, on the contrary, always reducible to some very tangible, though puerile, motive, e. g. the fear of corporal chastisement, degradation in their respective classes, vexation over some temporary disappointment, or inability to succeed in some fond pursuit.

Likewise, however, when I place before any "mind's eye" the generality of accounts of adult modern suicides, it seems to me beyond reasonable dispute that some reason or cause may easily be discovered which is quite independent of, and very distinct from, *actual insanity*. Look, O discerning and dispassionate Reader, hither and thither, and again hither and thither, and then compare and infer for thyself! How ardently those ambitious plans were pursued, yet ultimately they were foiled! how hopelessly that passionate attachment was indulged, yet it was in the end disappointed! how toilsomely those glittering possessions were acquired, yet they were suddenly lost! how fully confidence was placed, yet it was foully betrayed! how long disease was borne, yet it ever increased in incurable torture! how tenderly reputation was once watched over, yet it was irrevocably forfeited by one sad step! how hard religious doubts were struggled against, yet they finally proved destructive of all inward peace! how fondly those idols of domestic worship were treasured, yet they were one by one snatched into the grave! how keen that remorse, endured because of some action which was irrevocable! how humiliating that poverty, to which there seemed no end! how harassing those debts, for which there appeared no help! — — Look thereat, and say: need he or she have been exactly insane, because *suchlike things* scared the one or the other, nay, even very many, of them into self-wrought death?

But, some few, perhaps, aye, not a few of those who slay themselves were to all outward appearances blessed with every earthly good, with property and honor, with office and home, with spouse and child, with whatsoever makes most of us cherish and guard life; nor have they ever revealed even to their nearest relative or most familiar friend aught about a secret weight that oppressed the mind, or a secret woe that cankered at the heart —. Must not, *they*, then, have been insane? Foolish question! Knowest thou not that there exists sometimes, unobserved by others, a master-passion in a human

soul which swallows up all various other passions or delights? Knowest thou not that, though unseen by others, a sharp dagger may lie deeply sheathed in a human breast, and have inflicted a wound beyond all temporal relief or reach? And, if *they* preferred the silence of a self-wrought death to the telling of their tale on earth, is such deep secretiveness, whether from pride or from delicacy, necessarily synonymous with insanity?

Or, laying our hands on our own hearts, and judging by such inward self-testimony: how *very many* among us have not, at the one or the other period of our lives, felt ourselves in a greater or minor degree tempted and inclined to suicide? Yet, we could scarcely feel disposed to shield those humiliating moments behind a sudden attack of mental aberration, just as little as we should put forward as pretext a diabolic visitation altogether *sui generis* and unique!

Aye, and, finally, anything but infrequently there exists abundant and incontrovertible testimony to prove that our suicidal fellow-mortal was perfectly in his right mind and senses up to the very last day and even hour, that he knew quite well what he was about to commit, that he took the preliminary steps with measured circumspectness, occupied his last few moments with composing a clear and correct statement of his motives and reasons, had at some previous period either spoken or written in defence and praise of self-destruction, and had, haply, in advance scoffed at the very idea that his own act would be ascribed to some sort or degree of insanity! What possible right, then, have the survivors to invent and impute derangement where, taking all human actualities and possibilities into due account, everything had been most fully computed and most calmly arranged?

With this half a dozen or so of undeniable facts before us, we will stop a while to look at that English Coroner's Verdict of which previous mention has been made.

Our so-called Coroner's Inquests — at whatever period of time they may have first come into operation — are, undoubtedly, in and by themselves, i. e. according to the original idea and purport, always a most salutary and judicious, and sometimes an absolutely necessary, institution. Let us make this matter clear to ourselves in a very few words. The death of some person has taken place suddenly, in an unexpected and unusual manner; or, the corpse of some person, known or unknown, has been found: then the primary

business devolving upon the Coroner and his Jury is, I believe, to endeavor to determine, whether the deceased met with his or her death by an accident, or by foul play, or by self-inflicted violence. I need not assure anybody who has bestowed some little study on manuals and monographs of Medical Jurisprudence — and there exist not a few — that, though in many instances this point is very easily settled, it is in others extremely difficult to divine, and in some utterly impossible to determine. Indeed, even without consulting at all any book on Forensic Medicine, a little imagination and acuteness will enable anybody to think of cases coming under each of the said three heads. We, however, are interested at present only in *one* issue of such an investigation, viz. the conclusion that the deceased really committed *suicide*; whereupon, the further enquiry ensues: was the deceased *sane* or *insane* at the time, when he or she compassed death?

We will suppose that credible and impartial witnesses inform the Coroner and his Jury that the deceased had been medically and juridically already discovered and declared to be non compos mentis s. non sui juris; or, that he was believed or suspected by his immediate environment to be laboring under actual insanity, whether congenital or superinduced; or, that sundry members of the family, to which he or she had belonged, were known to have become insane and, haply, also — for this act occasionally repeats itself in successive generations — to have destroyed themselves; or, that the deadly action had been performed under the immediate influence of a febrile paroxysm; or, that it had wound up the train of the effects of confirmed drunkenness (*delirium tremens*), or other brain-debilitating and brain-disorganizing indulgences; or, that he or she was occasionally the victim of confusing and unconquerable religious hallucinations of one pernicious and distressing sort or the other; or, finally, even that the deed was done under the momentary influence of some sudden shock, whether mental, moral, or physical. — Well, supposing any one of these various cases, and especially, if there exist more or less good grounds for assuming that the deceased's character, convictions, and feelings were such as were not by any means likely to engender the *approval* of suicide: then, in the name of Reason, Justice, and Charity, let the Coroner's Court pronounce a: „destroyed himself, or herself, in a *state*“, or *fit*, of „Insanity.“ Nay,

should and might any doubt still linger in the breasts of the Judges, let the deceased, as in other cases, come in for the full benefit of the doubt thus harbored. And we will also add: inasmuch as the jurisdiction under mention is purely medico-legal, and not by any means theologico-moral, it is no concern whatever of the Coroner's Court, whether the deceased was, or was not, wholly guiltless of the cause, or causes, which mediately or immediately led to the said „state“ or „fit“ of Insanity; the responsibility or irresponsibility of the deceased opposite to the *act itself* as such is the only question to be decided by the Tribunal under discussion.

It is, however, a matter of course that such a question can be decided only by educated, thinking, conscientious men who, free from all respect to persons, examine closely into the bearings of the individual case. And, pray, how stands it with the conduct of these matters among ourselves? It is, if I mistake not, in 49 cases out of every 50 not much better than a mere farce! Bearing in distinct recollection a series of somewhat recent cases in my native town, it would appear to me that a bare certain amount of money-respectability does not supply a merchant or broker with any particularly shrewd insight into the criteria of Insanity, and that intimate personal friends of the deceased are not exactly the most likely persons to give an unbiassed verdict. But, perhaps, the Coroner himself really decides, inasmuch as the Jury are entirely swayed by his directions? Yet, if so, why the sham of a Jury at all? Indeed, in very many instances, besides the one under consideration, an intelligent and an impartial Judge would, I ween, decide far more rationally and justly than an ignorant, prejudiced set of Jurymen. Let us confess, not forgetful of a pretty fair array of late trials for e. g. murder or libel, that the Jury, erroneously and stupidly enough, would seem to have taken for granted that it was not their duty to decide, whether the law as laid down had been violated, but that it was rather their privilege to decree whether, according to their own views and feelings, the person tried ought or ought not to be penally visited with the punishment fixed by the existent code. And, as regards the subject now more particularly before us, both Coroner and Jurymen would appear to be extremely loath to arrive at any result prejudicial to the memory of the deceased, or discomfoting to the surviving relatives. Therefore, they find it most convenient and most charitable to dispose of almost any and every

case by the pass-words: „temporary Derangement“, „state of Lunacy“, „fit of Insanity“!!!

What name shall we give to such verdicts, when — as they often, most sadly often are — manifestly at variance with all the facts of the case, with the palpable tendency of the evidence adduced? We need not make much ado about the fittest designation for them; but, whether you be pleased to call them deliberate falsehoods, or, proofs of ignorance, or, kindly evasions: untrue they most assuredly are and remain, and, because untrue, undoubted stigmas upon the working of this institute in British social life.

I have been led to assume that, fifty or a hundred years ago, many foreign writers labored under the impression that in England the *wealthier classes* of the community were in the habit of bribing the Coroner to prescribe unto the Jury the above-mentioned mollifying or exculpatory verdict. And, indeed, when we consider how much depended on it in earlier days (i. e. prior to the year 1823, vide p. 286 of §. 77), so that not only an extremely ignominious burial, but likewise the confiscation of property resulted from the opposite verdict (viz. self-felony), it is quite possible, nay, even very probable, that in some isolated instances at least *direct monetary* bribes were proffered by relatives, heirs, or friends of the deceased, and, we may venture also to surmise, not declined by the Coroner. Upon the whole, however, I should incline to believe that the Coroners as a body were then, as they are now, too honorable to stoop to any suchlike meanness and injustice, and that additionally their official incomes were ample enough to render them independent of the exposure to the temptation to have recourse to the nefarious practice just alluded to. But, doubtless, then as now the *social position* of the deceased may and must be allowed to have operated almost invariably as a species of *indirect* bribe.

In Shakspeare's time already, „countenance“, i. e. partiality, indulgence, was shown in this particular to *gentlefolks*. Witness the discourse of the grave-diggers in the last Act of Hamlet.

2nd Clown. „Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of christian burial.“

1st Clown. „Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity, that ~~great~~ folk shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even-christian“ (i. e. fellow-christian).

For, no doubt, this was meant as a satirical side-glance at the actual practice among ourselves in our poet's age. However, in other European lands this matter was, perhaps, but little better; at least, at a very early period already Royal Letters of Remission occasionally in France interfered, in regard to *respectable* persons, to modify the legal or customary punishment of suicide: as, ¹⁾ when anno 1381 a French lady had hanged herself „qui estoit de si grant lignaige“, it was chiefly in consideration of „le lignaige dont elle estoit“, that „il nous plaira otroier que son corps ne soit ars ou autrement exécuté pour la cause dessus dite.“ — But to return to England. What in this respect existed in the 16th century, has verily! not been since then either abolished, or modified. The annals of our country exhibit, methinks, a pretty copious list of Nobles, Gentry, Clergy etc. who died by their own hands, some of whom we shall have occasion to name or even, perhaps, to discuss in the course of this Treatise. And I venture to ask: did you ever read or hear that a verdict of *self-felony* was pronounced against even half a dozen of *them*? Aye, or even — with mightily few exceptions — against any respectably connected Physician, influential Lawyer, wealthy Merchant, etc.? Against the *humbly-born* and *poor*, on the contrary, the said verdict has been often enough pronounced in times past, and is, though, doubtless, less frequently, pronounced occasionally also in our own days. O fie! O fie! upon thee, thou my church-speckled, caste-divided native country. Thou art fairly overdone with Chapels and Bibles, but standest most woefully in need of Equity and Justice. It is one of thy many boasts that all thy subjects are equal in the sight of the Law. *Theoretically*, I doubt it not; but *practically* far otherwise, far less so than in many other Christian countries, unless I be dreaming. The distinctions we make in life between high and low, rich and poor are surely already sufficiently invidious, contemptible, Christless; and must they, nevertheless, be perpetuated, after death has levelled the Baron and the Beggar into the self-same „dust unto dust?“ The grave, I fancy, is too serious to welcome fictions, and death too solemn to solicit lies. Oh, cease, then, thy social idolatries which render thee ridiculous and distasteful to all thinking people.

¹⁾ Vide the French document given by Du Cange, *Gloss. a. v. Bīathanatos*.

But, apart from this digression, all sensible English writers themselves, almost time immemorial up to the present hour, have complained about and inveighed against the verdicts of the Coroner's Inquest with regard to the sanity or insanity of suicides in general, have lamented their stupidity or censured their levity. And, as we have already hinted, very justly so. But, before we proceed to look at this matter in its purely ethical bearings, we will stop a while to set forth one of its serious drawbacks in reference to an Institution which enacts a very significant as well as a very salutary part in the economics of our modern social life, and is becoming, in consequence of the increasing difficulties and uncertainties of business and property, from year to year more extended, beneficial, necessary. I allude to Life-Insurance Companies. But, being neither a merchant nor a broker nor a political economist, I shall confine myself to putting the matter very simply, i. e. in such wise as must suggest and may commend itself to anybody possessed of common sense and reasonable feelings.

Suppose N to have insured his life for L. 5000, L. 500, or L. 50 in the Office of Company A or B, and to commit suicide after the lapse of a minor or longer period of time. Is the Policy thereby invalidated? Ought it to be thereby invalidated? Can it equitably become thereby invalidated? If a person have *wilfully* and *consciously* destroyed himself, he — for there, doubtless, are daring, reckless, ruined individuals to whom life has become valueless, or worse than worthless — may have done so for the very purpose of securing to his relatives or creditors the amount for which his life was insured: a case which would afford a sort of illustration of the proverb „robbing Peter to pay Paul“, or of the Jesuitical maxim „the end justifies the means.“ At all events, however, such a procedure would be neither more nor less than a manifest fraud committed on the Insurance Company; and, for my own part, I should rather incline to assume that in *this* hypothetical instance, in *every* instance of wilful and conscious suicide, whatever the immediate motive may have been, the Company has perfect right on its side, if it consider every claim on the part of the deceased as forfeited, whether he have contributed much or little, a short or a long time, to their funds. If, on the contrary, a person whose life is insured should have *willessly* and *unconsciously*, i. e. in a state or fit of veritable Insanity, destroyed himself, he was simply unfortunate, simply met

with an accident, simply died of disease: e. g. whether he fell into the water and was drowned, or jumped into the water and drowned himself — the *manner* of his death is not really of any moment, inasmuch as no self-slaughteous *design* did exist, or, in point of fact, could exist. Therefore, as it seems to me, in such instances it would be as unjust as it would be ungenerous, were the statutes of an Insurance Society to fix that the insurance effected had become null and void; or, that only the money paid in should be returned, with, or without, the interest thereon; or, that only a certain proportion of the amount of the insurance, whether one fourth, or one third, or one half, should be actually allowed to the survivors. But, as it is, on the one hand, the undoubted duty of an Insurance Company to make, prior to the effecting of the insurance, all proper enquiries, whether the person offering himself be (mentally or physically) predisposed to Insanity, or belong to a family in which a propensity to Insanity, and consequent Suicide, had ever shown itself: so, on the other hand, an Insurance Company has an unquestionable right to be certified by some perfectly competent and trust-worthy medico-forensic Board or Court that the deceased individual under consideration was *bona fide insane*, when his death took place. — Yet, what possible reliance can any Company in its senses place upon the verdicts which are ordinarily yielded by our present Coroner's Inquests? — Therefore, even in a purely *business* point of view we „nation of shop-keepers“, as we have been, and not without much semblance of truth, styled, ought to look to this matter, and also to mend it somehow. The task I proposed to myself consisted solely in soliciting attention to the problem which, as I learnt from an anonymous pamphlet¹⁾ called forth anno 1819 by the melancholy end of Sir Samuel Romilly, has been already publicly noticed in a cursory manner; for, exact law, *founded on clear, broad principles*, is not the forte of our English Precedent-Legislation.

We now go back to the moral feature of our enquiry. Of course, if we were to assume with e. g. the Greek philosopher, Aristo of Chios,²⁾ that health, soundness, sanity is synonymous with

¹⁾ Thoughts on Suicide, in a letter to a Friend, pp. 38, 39. Two judicial trials which took place in the year 1811 are therein adduced; but all I can at this moment recollect of them is that the respective decisions were opposite the one to the other. ²⁾ Vide Plutarch de virtute morali, §. 2, and cf. Aeschylus, Eumen. l. 509, and Plato, de Rep. IX, 2, 3.

wisdom, virtue, piety, and apply to e. g. the Roman poet Juvénal's often-quoted „mens sana in corpore sano“ the highest possible standard, we might, haply, discover that, from the standing-point of genuine christian faith and culture at least, there is some kind and degree of Insanity, i. e. unhealth, unsoundness, in every case of suicide, as also there is in every unwise, immoral, irreligious action, whatsoever name it may chance to bear. But, since we have not — thank God — as yet arrived at that point of refinement which authorizes us to call e. g. debauchery, gambling, drunkenness, theft, murder — though they likewise may *sometimes* be traced to Insanity — literally Insanity, and to excuse them, or palliate them, by calling them so: we ought, for the sake of consistency, to admit that only a certain, and even comparatively small, proportion of modern cases of self-destruction have anything to do with veritable Insanity; for only thus, I ween, shall we be neither deceiving ourselves nor belying others, only thus judging truthfully of the dead and dealing fairly towards the living.

Dr. Casper, a Berlin physician, writing thirty years ago, with most scrupulous accuracy endeavors to assign ¹⁾ the causes in each individual case of 500 cases of self-destruction which occurred in the Prussian capital from 1818 — June 1824 inclusive. It is true, he puts down no fewer than 282 as having occurred from causes unknown; but it is equally true that he assigns — taking his stand upon official documents — *mental derangement* (*Geisteserrüttung*) as the cause of 61 only. And, as we shall see in §. 75, Prussia was at that time almost as notorious for suicide as England. — And, if I may be permitted to descend from so exact an authority to the statistical communications of the clerk of the Morgue in Paris, as recently made to an English traveller, ²⁾ not a very dissimilar result presents itself in regard to those suicides whose corpses chance to be temporarily conveyed into the public dead-house of the French capital. „I ventured to suppose“ — thus our anonymous Englishman — „that where everything was so methodically ordered, some approximation as to the cause of the numerous suicides — the last scene of which was witnessed in the Morgue — had been arrived

¹⁾ Beiträge zur medicinischen Statistik und Staatsarzneikunde, 1825, B. I. p. 70.

²⁾ Vide in Dicken's Household Words the article „Dead Reckoning at the Morgue“, p. 80. of vol. XXII of the Leipzig reprint.

at in the establishment. Monsieur Baptiste told me I was right. Diligent enquiry, voluntary information, and conjecture based upon long experience, had, he believed, arrived very nearly at the truth, and these conclusions were thus set forth. Taking 169 for the annual aggregate, the number of men who committed suicide *in a state of insanity or delirium* was 22; of women 8.¹⁾ while on account of causes that *could not be ascertained or guessed at* there remained 16 men and 5 women.“ — Why, now, should we stipulate for any extraordinary preponderance of *insanity-caused* cases of self-destruction in our own country?

The greater part of what we might desire to advance in reply to the question we have just put will more properly find a place in §§. 67 and 75 to both of which I must therefore take the liberty of referring the reader already now. The few points, however, which I will here touch upon shall not be there re-introduced.

The quotations I have above made render it pretty evident that those Continental writers who laid such stress upon the existence of a sort of suicidal „dementia“ among the English, did not thereby mean exactly Insanity (Madness, Lunacy) in the severest and extreme acceptation of which this term admits, but rather simply something kindred to what is more usually designated as Melancholy, Hypochondriasis, Spleen: which last word, indeed, I have found frequently employed by other Continental authors for the purpose of expressing the questionable Anglican suicidal tendency. It lies far beyond my horizon to discern, describe, define how far Melancholy, Hypochondriasis, Spleen are, though cognate, yet somewhat different, in their nature and cause: suchlike mental and physical niceties are the province of *scientific medical* men who even themselves, I venture to surmise, not infrequently become guilty of some measure of Babel-tower linguistic confusion, when they undertake to determine what, perhaps, after all can be fathomed and explained only with indifferent success. Enough for our immediate purpose that a century or more ago a predominant disposition to suicide, a frequent commission of suicide were by medical authors, and, indeed, by the Scotchman Cheyne²⁾ even before such foreigners as e. g.

¹⁾ On p. 79 the average proportion of male and female suicides in general is given as 130 of the former to 35 of the latter. ²⁾ The English Malady, or a treatise of nervous diseases of all kinds (1733), more especially in the Preface. Vide also his: „natural method of curing“, etc. 1742.

Lorry¹⁾ and Sauvages²⁾ published their works, predicated as an effect of an almost peculiarly English form of mental disease. Though the pertinent passages are not at this moment before me to re-consult, the impression on my mind is this: that veritable Derangement is not the thing which the writers referred to in the foot-note meant, but apparently rather what we non-medical reasoners might incline to denominate — not to use such vulgar terms as Vapours, Blue Devils, Horrors — sheer perpetual and intense lowness of spirits, lassitude, listlessness, weariness of life.

Thence, indeed, I have occasionally found in German non-medical books our Coroner's verdict of „temporary insanity“ interpreted as being synonymous with what we call dying „of a broken heart.“ This expression is, perhaps, a somewhat sentimental solecism of ours, and, since a literal „cor ruptum“ is, I believe, a thing almost unheard-of in medical experience, we cannot much wonder that foreigners should have expounded it thus arbitrarily. But, though suicides may frequently be said to have been broken-hearted, to die of a broken heart is still something very different from dying by one's own hand, and to be broken-hearted is anything but necessarily synonymous with being insane, unless we were willing to admit that all inconsolable grief and unconquerable mental anguish which gradually, but unceasingly, prey upon man's vital organs, until the lamp of life dwindle, flicker, and become extinguished, be insanity. No, to die of a broken heart means to pine away slowly and inactively, nor is even the faintest symptom of insanity *necessarily* therewith connected; and still less would it imply a negation of all moral responsibility. Nor is, as far as I am aware, such a verdict as „died of a broken heart“ ever given in a case of self-destruction, though the said writers seem to have fancied that it pretty frequently is. — The stoutest hearts, no doubt, as well as the tenderest may be broken in England as everywhere else; and, God knows, there often occurs enough on life's pilgrimage to break them, in our England, methinks, more often than in any other European country, though our hearts be not therefore tenderer than those of our Continental brethren; but this passing reflection is beside our question, — and we will let it pass quickly.

¹⁾ De melancholia et morbis melancholicis, 1765, T. I, c. 4. ²⁾ Nosologia methodica, 1768, T. II, p. 258: his description of what he terms melancholia anglica „Apud Anglos“ etc.

When Gall instituted his examinations of the skulls of suicides, he was on the Continent, not in England, and consequently had the craniums of continental suicides before him. I should not feel myself justified in denying the facts he adduces, nor can I marvel that, since he (*vide* *ibid.* pp. 324, 321) inclined to pre-suppose an existent organ of murderous desire or Destructiveness (*Würgfinn*, *Mordfinn*), he should have also taken for granted that there was such a thing as an organ of suicidal tendency and necessity, so that — making all due allowance for the distinction he (*ibid.* p. 222) draws between the possibility of being able to act and the necessity of being compelled to act — even deliberate suicide would be produced not by *principles*, but by certain inward innate or connate *necessities*, and would, therefore, as matter of course be in a measure morally guiltless. But, *in general*, such a theory, besides being painful and humiliating in the extreme, has scarcely the whole of truth on its side. It has, as all such semi-materialistic theories easily do, become the foundation-stone of a so-called School, more especially in Edinburgh, I believe, where *hardest*, *commonest* sense would appear to rule in matters of metaphysical enquiry; but what there is in it to enthusiasmize the soul or elevate the will of man, I cannot myself see, and therefore feel strongly disposed, on moral grounds already, to disrelish it. If man be in part the creature of organization, he is also in part the creature of circumstances, but still only in part; for, free agency and responsible choice remain to constitute no inconsiderable portion of what he becomes, fails in, does, or leaves undone. At least, yon faith which was voiced forth, some eighteen hundred years ago, beneath the palm-trees on the Jordan, inculcates some such fact, and each of us will, as I take it, do well to urge it upon himself and to foster it in himself as much as possible, whenever the mention is of misdeed or misfortune of any kind. So-called Fate will always have enough to do in our concerns, and will, doubtless, in due season be answerable for its own part: let us not needlessly burden it, or call it prematurely to account. — And, as to the *specific* instances before us, there is not a single clear-sighted, unbiassed physician, e. g. Esquirol, Falret, Heinroth, who, from the standing-point of his professional experience, has not boldly declared that the correctness of Gall's observations has not been by any means to their full extent borne out by their own, and that they,

on purely physiological grounds, could not subscribe to the inferences he had drawn from the limited number he had made.

I doubt not but that among ourselves suicide occasionally occurs with a sort of inward necessity, consequently irresponsibly, though *no mental derangement be manifest*, and *no moral motive exist*, and even a decided struggle be for a long time made against it. Some inborn cerebral malformation, or whatever else similar, may have constituted a kind of suicidal instinct, from childhood upwards, growing stronger and ever stronger, until it at last become irresistible and triumphant. We can only wonder in silence over such mysterious predestining organization, and must weep bitter tears over the lot of a human tree whose leaves were never vernal fresh nor summerly green, and may gratefully welcome the autumnal blast that at last wasted them, faded and withered, hence. Also, however, among other peoples the same phenomenon may be witnessed, as e. g. in the case of a Mrs. H. L. at Berlin anno 1815 which, under the denomination of *natural suicide*,¹⁾ is monographically treated by Dr. Schultz. „In dem Wesen, in der Natur des körperlichen Mißverhältnisses ist das Gefühl der Lebenslast, und in der Natur dieses Gefühls wiederum das Bedürfnis, das Leben zu entfernen, begründet. So lange die Vernunft noch herrscht, ist es der Natur des Menschen zuwider, daß das Gefühl den Willen zu Handlungen bestimmt; ist aber die Vernunft, wie in unserm Fall, nur nach dem hartnäckigsten Widerstand, vom Gefühl gänzlich besiegt, so steht dem Gefühl nichts mehr im Wege, und es ist natürlich, daß es seine Bedürfnisse, seine Triebe befriedigt.“ Yet mark! in this case there was anatomical evidence of the existence of such a sad and heavy previous death-life, of gradual diminution of the brain and consequent gradual thickening of the bones of the skull (encephalophthisis s. tabes cerebialis); but, pray, in how few of the English cases under discussion would a post mortem dissection — and, if I mistake not, anatomy is in such matters the only credible witness, though even it is not omniscient and infallible — be likely to bear testimony to anything of this kind?

Therefore, if Dr. Schultz apply, as he does, his previously quoted reasonings to *many* Englishmen, we hesitate to believe him, unless he can specify his cases with equal detailedness.

What has, I believe, led various Continental writers to assume

¹⁾ Der natürliche Selbstmord, 1815, p. 39, and cf. p. 37.

that some sort of Insanity (Spleen, Blue Devils, Vapours) must have had more or less to do with the suicide of English persons more especially, is the circumstance that a comparatively large number of the latter moved in the higher ranks of life and belonged to the wealthier classes of the community. But, surely, just rank and wealth, by the superior facilities which they afford, more especially in England, for becoming blasé and unnerved, may induce their possessor, when blasé and unnerved, to commit suicide *wilfully* and *wantonly*, quite as well as their opposites more frequently do on the Continent by withholding from their victim the enjoyments which he in vain coveted and sought.

With all this our climate has, I ween, very little to do. Montesquieu was, in general, far too fond of letting matters social and ethical be engendered by climatic influences; and in reference to our topic later Continental authors, without having troubled themselves much to think about its grounds and issues, eagerly caught up and patly reiterated his one-sided and exaggerated dictum, though Voltaire already had been sharp-witted enough to smile and to sneer at it. Wise men have contended with one another, whether hot or cold climates, humid or dry climates be most productive of Insanity in general, and I must leave them to settle this matter according to the data before them; but, when I think over the bulk of such cases of suicide on the part of English persons as have become known to me, I can scarcely refrain from assuming that the same passions, activities, occupations, indulgences would, under any other climate likewise, have led to the same result; and that, taking all in all, quite as few of them were the births of Insanity, or of aught resembling Insanity, by whatsoever technical name you may choose to call that aught, as the same number of cases would be, if extracted at random from the annals of Continental suicide. — Let us briefly take a few instances of persons of more or less „mark and likelihood“ in various modern ages by way of illustration and comparison.

(†. 1538.) Filippo Strozzi was the wealthiest and one of the most patriotic citizens of Florence. When Duke Cosmo I resolved upon prosecuting and exterminating all the friends of Liberty in his dominions, Strozzi was among the victims doomed to the torture and to execution, though by marriage-ties closely allied to the Medicis whose friend and benefactor he had proved himself on various occa-

sions. He was, consequently, arrested and imprisoned. For some time, even Charles V promised and endeavored to shield him from Cosmo's vindictiveness: so distinguished was he for knowledge, taste, refinement, and magnanimity.¹⁾ However, the Emperor ultimately consented to let the Duke act in the matter according to his own inclinations. But, no sooner had Strozzi learnt that he was to be put first to the torture and afterwards to death than he himself cut his own throat, whilst in prison, assigning as his chief reason for doing so his fear that the torture might constrain him to compromise or betray the one or the other of his friends, etc. And he left behind him²⁾ in writing sundry short allusions to his suicidal determination and action among which there are the most unequivocal testimonies that he regarded such death of his as a well-timed work of virtue, and would be quite content to share, supposing God not to pardon it, the lot of Cato in a future world, and only hoped that an avenger of his cause might arise from out of his ashes. „Se io non ho saputo insino a qui vivere, io saprò morire. S'io non merto perdono, manda almanco quest' anima, dov' è quella di Catone. Exoriatu aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!“ — Surely, those Italian exclamations and this Virgilian quotation constitute incontestable evidence of his perfect sanity at the period under mention.

(† 1693.) After the loss of his first wife, Charles Blount, the well-known English Deist, about whom we shall have to speak in connexion with Charles Gildon, who, by the by, figures more than once somewhat ingloriously in Pope's *Dunciad*, at some length in §. 74, had fallen violently in love with a sister of hers whom he wished to marry, and who reciprocated his affection. But the law which interdicts among ourselves matrimony with a deceased wife's sister, inexorably interfered. I cannot at this moment say with certainty, whether our precious Luther-refuting and England-reforming King Henry the Eighth's adulterous aims and ends were or were not the real cause of this same law's being introduced into our „Table of forbidden degrees“; but, who does not know that it has of late years been debated ad nauseam, and hitherto unsuccessfully, in the British Parliament, and that the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone displayed his theological lore by construing e. g. Levit. XVIII, 18

¹⁾ Vide Sismondi's *Hist. of the Italian Republics*, T. XVI, ch. 122. ²⁾ Cf. Segni's *Storie Fiorentine dell' anno 1527 al 1555*, lib. IX, vol. II, pp. 212, 213 of the edit. 1805.

in a manner which the Rabbis themselves, practically at all events, repudiate, and which, even supposing it to be the correct manner, most assuredly ought not in the least to influence at this time of day a christian occidental people in decreeing what they may think befitting and salutary in a civil contract? — The afore-mentioned lady had conscientious objections to acting in opposition to the inveterate obstinacy or scrupulous perseverance of the clerical authorities, and Blount shot himself, he being at the time in the 41st year of his age. Inasmuch, now, as there does not exist any evidence whatsoever to prove that he was at that or any other period of his life beside himself, and there, on the contrary, does exist no trifling amount of evidence to show that he had always thought somewhat favorably and justifyingly of suicide: why, in the name of common sense, should we suppose him to have been insane, because he, under circumstances the most trying to himself, voluntarily put an end to his own life?

(† 1837.) Dr. Weidig, protestant clergyman at Obergleen in Hessen-Darmstadt, a virtuous and able man, having been *suspected* of political misdoings — a crime of which, as we know, rather many good and clever men were *there* and *then* supposed guilty of —, was unjustly imprisoned, and mercilessly detained in close custody at Darmstadt without any veritable trial. Disappointed and wearied out, insulted, maltreated and disgusted, he at last mangled, for want of some apter instrument, with a sherd of glass his throat and veins to pieces, and died, after he had written with blood, half-legibly, upon the eastern wall of his cell „da mir der Feind jede Vertheidigung versagt, so wähle ich einen schimpflichen Tod von freien Stücken.“ — It is true, his enemies spoke of madness in his case;¹⁾ but those distinct and emphatic words, to which his initials were appended, surely might give any such declaration the lie!

What the English coroner's verdict was in the case of Blount, I do not recollect; what it would have been in the cases of Strozzi and Weidig, I will not pretend to divine; but its value in general, and the value of our wonted phraseology about the madness of individual *noto-worthy* suicides, I will passingly illustrate by a few cursory notices on the life and death of one of ourselves who, though

¹⁾ Der Tod des Pfarrers Dr. F. L. Weidig. Ein actenmäßiger und urkundlich belegter Beitrag zur Beurtheilung des geheimen Strafprocesses und der politischen Zustände Deutschlands, 1843, pp. 83, 85, 88, 129.

a mere boy in age, viz. he was not 17, when he poisoned himself, had been a veritable man according to the stature of mind and the vigor of feeling even a year or two before his meteoric career flashed away (1770). I mean, as the reader will have already guessed, Thomas Chatterton.¹⁾

Before he went to London, he was in the habit of carrying a small pocket-pistol loaded about him which he on one occasion produced and held to his forehead, when suicide chanced to be the topic of conversation, exclaiming „now — if one had but the courage to pull the trigger.“ Soon afterwards, in a letter to a friend, he avowed his resolution to put an end to his life immediately; the letter was intercepted, and the person to whom it was addressed, endeavored to convince him of the criminality of suicide; but, nevertheless, Chatterton sent him forthwith another epistle in which suicide appears still to haunt him as a perplexing and a not improbable alternative. In one of his poems,²⁾ written anno 1769, we find him speaking of suicide lightly as of a subject familiar to his mind, and in no wise warring against his principles. Whilst still in Bristol, four months before his death, he made a Will in which he foretells, with perfect self-possession and not without considerable levity, his immediate self-destruction. Three days before his death, whilst walking with a friend of his in a church-yard, he said to him: „my dear friend, I feel the sting of a speedy dissolution; I have been at war with the grave for some time,³⁾ and find it is not so easy to vanquish as I imagined; we can find an asylum from every creditor but that.“ And the preamble to his Will, in which he enlarges upon the question, whether the Court will, or will not, bring him in a *felo de se*, runs thus. „This is the last Will and Testament of me, Thomas Chatterton, of the city of Bristol; being sound in body, or it is the fault of my last surgeon: the soundness of my mind the coroner and jury are to be judges of, desiring them to take notice that the most perfect masters of human nature in Bristol distinguish me by the title of the Mad

¹⁾ Vide for the quotations I shall make the 1842 Cambridge edit. of „the poetical works of Thomas Chatterton, with notices of his life“, etc., pp. 116—119, 138 of the life, vol. I, p. 244, vol. II, pp. 622—629, and cf. also pp. 7, 8, 44, 48—50, 52; 75 of the biography prefixed to the oldest edition of his works. ²⁾ „Sentiment“, vol. II, p. 439. ³⁾ Cf. his poem „Resignation“, vol. II, p. 621.

Genius; therefore, if I do a mad action, it is conformable to every action of my life, which all savoured of insanity.“ — — After having previously destroyed all his papers, he swallowed a dose of arsenic, and died on the following day.

The Coroner's Jury which sate upon him pronounced him to have been insane at the time of his self-inflicted death; and by far the greater number of later English writers have subscribed to their verdict, e. g. Lord Byron: „Chatterton, I think, was mad“; Mrs. S. C. Hall: „his mighty mind brought with it into the world a taint of hereditary insanity, which explains the act of suicide, and divests it of its fearful guilt“; Southey: „Chatterton *was* insane — better proof of this than the coroner's inquest is that there was insanity in his family.“ — More wisely Shelley and Wordsworth seem to have assumed that his suicide must be ascribed to the momentary pressure of want and the sting of disappointment; but far nearer the truth, unless I be much mistaken, it would be to pronounce it a *deliberate* act committed in the calm conviction that he was *justified* in committing it; and, at all events, I cannot but agree with some anonymous writer in the Eclectic Review, when he says „that act itself, committed in a far too deliberate determination to allow the plea of insanity in *any* such sense as to suspend responsibility“, etc.

Aye, let us be rational and just. Whether applied to other peoples or to ourselves, there is infinitely more truth and sense in such utterances as e. g. the few following ones than in all our fashionable sentimentality and commonplace levity about insanity etc. as a *sine qua non* of suicide. Montaigne (in the work quoted §. 74): „par où il appert combien improprement nous appellons desespoir cette dissolution volontaire, à laquelle la chaleur de l'espoir nous porte souvent, et souvent *une tranquille et rassise inclination de jugement*.“ J. J. Rousseau (in the work discussed §. 21): „cependant combien n'avons-nous pas d'exemples attestés d'hommes sages en tout autre point, qui, sans remords, sans fureur, sans désespoir, renoncent à la vie uniquement parcequ'elle leur est à charge, et meurent *plus tranquillement* qu'ils n'ont vécu.“ Heinroth: ¹⁾ „wie zu

¹⁾ Vide p. 633 of his kritische und erläuternde Zusätze to Dr. Fille's *Beitrag: Esquirol's allgemeine und specielle Pathologie und Therapie der Geistesstörungen*, first bearbeitet, 1827.

jeber bösen That, so kann sich der Mensch auch zu Mord und Selbstmord mit freiem Entschlusse bestimmen.“ — — —

To observe indignant and contemptuous silence on cases which arose from sheerest levity or most puerile vanity — many have had this origin, and more especially in our days, when, as I have here and there found recorded, several persons have occasionally, in Germany and France, made a sort of covenant with each other to end suicidally, and have faithfully kept to their word, thus forming a species of suicidal clique, not a few are ascribable to this source —, let us willingly admit that — 'tis easy to heap simile upon simile — our brother-man or sister-woman felt their feet very sore, when they sank down wearily midway on their pilgrimage; that they found life's burden exceeding heavy, when they prematurely flung it away; that the cup of time tasted passing bitter to their lips, when they with loathing dashed it to the ground; that yon night in their soul was sadly starless, when they freely burst open the portal of the darksome tomb; that the earth's lap seemed wofully cold to them, when they voluntarily pillowed their head on the bosom of icy death; that the hand of the well-known Present lay hard upon them, when they resolutely plunged for rescue into the power of an utterly unknown Future. — Thus it must have been with thee, thou most dearly loved friend of my youth! and on yon with deep grass surrounded broken pillar which marks thy lonesome grave at (near which I have spent many a grief-paralyzed hour, years upon years having succeeded only in softening, but not in destroying, the recollection of what in our Student-years at thou wast unto me, and, haply, I was also unto thee) I in spirit gently lay „in memoriam“ this simple „Totentranz“, of cypress-leaves and passion-flowers. — You, my reader and I would, as we hope and trust, not have acted thus under like circumstances; but *they* were not *you* or *I*: they were different, some, no doubt, worse, others, perchance, better; but, whether they were better or worse, insane they most assuredly were not. Why, indeed, must they needs be supposed to have been so? Rather, then, say that they were weak, mistaken, or even wicked in dallying with the „air-suspended dagger“ as a possible thing, and doubly so in „clutching“ it and succumbing to its sharp point as a desirable thing; but are not, as we have said before over and over again, weak-

ness, mistakenness, and even wickedness somewhat far from being identical with insanity?

No! No! If it be but just that medical works should contain a searching and scrupulous chapter on real mental disease as a cause of suicide, willed, attempted, committed; and if it be but just that juridical works should most emphatically specify that all cases of suicide which may be accounted the result of real mental disease shall be very leniently dealt with, or rather not dealt with at all: yet, for Heaven's sake, let us cease to be so shallow, so one-sided, so sophistical as to proclaim some cerebral disorganization a *sine qua non* of self-disembodiment, and to declare that what was manifestly of volition and consciousness was not of volition and consciousness. For, though it may be true that sometimes, according to human computation, Insanity would have stepped in, had not Suicide anticipated it, yet even in such cases, if Suicide did anticipate it, such Suicide was incontestably a deed of Freedom and Responsibility, and dare not be otherwise judged of.

No! No! Instead of reiterating all such half-digested, sickly, sentimental trash about Suicidal Insanity or Insane Suicides, let the spiritual wardens on the watch-towers of our Cities and Lands call aloud: O ye children of men, „fight nobly“, determined not to surrender, but to conquer, be active, temperate, pure, prayerful, God-trusting, Jesus-imitating; for, if ye allow yourselves to die spiritually, to become inwardly demoralized, that „sorrow“ easily beckons which is „unto death“, and „sin“ may suddenly demand „death as its wages.“ — —

§. 14. The relation of the Law of Nature to suicide.

Insanity is the ordinary accompaniment, or even the invariable cause, of suicide: this somewhat prevalent modern christian belief or assertion (which we have discussed in the previous §) roots, to a very considerable extent at least, in the belief or assertion that self-destruction is *against the Law of Nature*. Thence the logical connexion of this present § with the preceding one. In other words, putting the matter in a presumptively argumentative form: natural death is, as the work, so likewise the law, of Nature, and the awaiting of the time and mode of dissolution appointed by Nature is, as the organic tendency of Instinct, so likewise the manifest

precept of Reason; ergo, suicide is, because anti-natural, eo ipso also anti-rational, or — vice versâ, if you please.

I feel disposed to affirm that in almost every anti-suicidal essay some such brief axiom as „self-destruction is against the law of Nature“ may be met with, put into the bargain somewhat ex abrupto. Nevertheless, I have never been able clearly to comprehend it, and, as far as I could comprehend it, I have not been able fully to assent to it. Its very universality renders it vague, and its comprehensiveness renders it questionable. I imagine that, if we attempt to reduce it within sober bounds, some measure of deception, untruth, nonsense might be discovered lurking behind it, though, of course, a great degree of real meaning and value must also be supposed to attach to it. Let us, then, take it to task, simply, but earnestly. The enquiry cannot but prove more or less conducive to our historical as well as to our psychological purpose.

The Law here meant is that of *self-preservation*; but what is meant by Nature? By some mystically organized and dreamy thinkers already the *vegetable kingdom*, because forsooth, e. g. the so-called sensitive plant reveals a sort of inborn desire, and manifests a kind of strenuous exertion, for self-preservation! Thus, for instance, on p. 12 of a somewhat peculiar anti-suicidal didactic poem by Dennys.¹⁾ The hypothesis is hyper-acute, and we shall be reminded of something kindred in spirit, when we come to speak of the imaginatively pensive Eastern peoples (vide e. g. p. 15 of §. 48); but we ourselves cannot make any use of it, from our lack of fancy, if you like. Flowers, as master-works of the Creative Mind of the Beautiful and Beneficent, can and do teach us much; yet, aught like an anti-suicidal law we have never either discerned, or sought for, in their habits, and, upon the whole, strongly dislike the effort to discover in them what their Author would not appear to have desired to convey by them. — The *brute creation* is, doubtless, a much higher stage of vitality, and in its doings or non-doings we are bid by far cooler philosophers to trace and derive some amount of instruction and guidance on the matter at issue. Thus, for instance, among the ancients Josephus, when arguing gravely and solemnly against suicide, assured his Jewish hearers (vide his oration as discussed in §. 54) that no animal is ever known to kill

¹⁾ The complete title of which I shall mention on p. 179 of §. 74.

itself, and the speculatively gifted living theologian Rothe teaches us ¹⁾ that „alles Lebendige ist ja seinem Begriff selbst zufolge darauf gestellt, sich selbst zu erhalten, weshalb denn auch kein Thier sich selbst tödtet“ (adding, somewhat oddly, for my capacity at least — „als bloßes Thier würde der Selbstmörder gern fortleben“). Here we have, at all events, something less misty and shadowy to deal with, and will therefore dwell upon it somewhat longer.

Though I am anything but well-read in works of Natural History, I had noted down a dozen or two of stories from both heathen and christian writers about animals that *are said* to indulge occasionally in suicide: quadrupeds, birds, fish, insects. Two by the way, a very ancient and a very modern one. The elder Pliny ²⁾ asserts that the heath-cock, when taken from its Alpine home, so intensely disrelishes encagement that it intentionally dies by holding back its breath („moriuntur contumacia spiritu revocato“); and a German newspaper ³⁾ gives a circumstantial recital of a scorpion recently at Pera, which, despairing, after sundry fruitless attempts, of getting over the burning coals placed around it, at last deliberately forced its venomous sting into its own head.

We venture upon the few following observations.

Firstly. The ancient classical writers are more particularly lavish of stories of this sort, e. g. (to be silent on Plutarch) Aelian, one of the latest old Greek authors, in that work of his which is specially devoted to Natural History. ⁴⁾ Not only, however, were these ancient classical Naturalists apparently extremely superstitious in general, as anybody may convince himself by reading the respective works of Pliny and Aelian; but they may even be said to have had a specific interest in believing in the suicide of animals, inasmuch as they would thereby gain a sort of argument, we might say, for their own view and tenet that suicide was anything but a perverse or an unnatural act on the part of man. How liberal Pliny was in his advocacy of suicide, we shall have occasion to learn in §. 28; and here only a few words to prove that also Aelian

¹⁾ Theologische Zeitsch., 1848, B. III, p. 200. ²⁾ H. N. lib. VIII, cap. 5, sect. 64; and cf. also lib. X, cap. 6, sect. 29. ³⁾ Vide the Stuttgart Flora, Januar 28, 1855. By the by, the suicide or non-suicide of scorpions is argued to and fro with considerable zest and zeal also in Boswell's Johnson. ⁴⁾ Hist. Anim., lib. II, 38, 40; III, 40, 42; IV, 7; V, 28; VI, 15, 25, 29, 44; VII, 28, 40; XII, 22; XVII, 9.

entertained similar opinions.¹⁾ He says that „Oedipus acted unwisely (ἀμαθῶς) also in not slaying himself, but bereaving himself of his eyes, and in not perceiving that it stood in his power to become rid of all his ills, instead of cursing his house and race, and attempting to heal by an incurable ill the already past ills.“ — And, when speaking of a certain Indian bird whose excrements cause a sleeplike mode of death, he says: the Indians are to be extolled as happy on account of a possession which enables them to withdraw themselves from the terrestrial carcer (i. e. earthly life), when they choose“ (quite Platonically: ὡς τῆς φρουρᾶς ἐνταυθοῖ ἀπολυθῆναι ὅταν ἐθέλωσιν).

Secondly. We might deny right out the credibility of suchlike narratives, pronounce them mere anecdotes or fables, and should, perhaps, not be altogether wrong in doing so, though it is an invidious task either to question the veracity or to doubt the discernment of the one or the other modern Naturalist or Traveller who has incidentally noticed, and himself believed, them. At all events, however, looking at Pliny's story, by way of illustration, nothing kindred would seem to happen within the range of our own personal observation. Admitting, for argument's sake, that long-accustomed servitude has (as it is the case with many slaves and prisoners of human kind) partially worn out of the race and the individuals of our horses, asses, dogs etc. nature's original energy and elasticity, feeling of independence and love of freedom, so that the various drudges of our households, farmsteads, places of business etc. are never known to destroy themselves, despite such ample and urgent causes as very many of their human but inhumane, and merely soi-disant christian, masters and mistresses give them, as if supposing them as incapable of *physical pain* as poets (vide e. g. Young's N. T. V, 558) pronounce them, gratuitously enough perchance, „all *sorrow* beneath“, causes which have in sundry European countries evoked into existence — to our shame be it told — „Societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals;“ — yet, we should scarcely be warranted in making the same admission in regard to e. g. the Lion and the Tiger, the Eagle and the Vulture in our modern Menageries and Zoological Gardens. Recently taken out of their native forests and removed from climes congenial to

¹⁾ Ibid. lib. III, c. 47 in fine; and lib. IV, c. 41 in fine.

their organization, where they, with their vigorous and pliant limbs, their powerful pinions and their full-orbed eyes, had been wont to roam, prowl, bound, cleave the air, nestle aloft, and gaze into the sun with a freedom, a buoyancy, an ecstasy civilized man himself might almost feel tempted to envy, — and henceforth confined within barred, narrow, often almost airless and lightless, dens, or perched upon wretchedly short poles in dingy, dirty cells often even with the addition of chains to their legs, as if their captivity must be rendered still severer, fed artificially, as it were, and converted into a mere passive show for the idle gaze, or wanton sport, of men, women, and children:¹⁾ methinks, the temptation of such wild beasts and birds of prey to liberate themselves out of such a burdensome, tortureful, unnatural life might be supposed great indeed; — and, nevertheless, as far as I am aware, there is no example on record of their having terminated their irksome and withering existence by a proveably self-willed and self-wrought death. For a while, some of them may have obstinately refused food, have growled and sulked over their monstrously lingering condition, have indulged in various unavailing endeavors to find an outlet into liberty, or, they may actually have succeeded by their utmost efforts in breaking those bonds which man's superiority, ingenuity and curiosity had rivetted for them; but, in general, most of them gradually, and even quickly, become reconciled to their involuntary exile and incarceration, and bear their more or less barbarous doom life-long, if not always exactly with the best possible humor and grace, yet with such an astonishing degree of indifference or equanimity as might put the adiaphoron-theory and constantia-boast of many a Stoic to the blush.

Thirdly. Supposing, therefore, the above anecdote of Pliny's not to be entirely baseless, or to possess only apparent truth, i. e. the said incident merely *seemed* suicide to those who were not, and could not be, fully cognizant of the wish and will of the bird in question, we should at all events be warranted in inferring from the details I have just entered into that the propensities and habits of the brute creation are anything but suicidal. And if we return

¹⁾ I recollect having read, some years ago, a very feeling paper on this subject by Leigh Hunt, republished in a collection of his miscellaneous writings, the exact title of which is no longer present to my memory.

for a moment to that matter about the scorpion, we might further suggest that what has appeared to some Naturalists as deliberate suicide is possibly what we might call *phrenzy*, i. e. an act committed in a state of phrenzy, such phrenzy having been produced by extreme pain, or fear, or passion, or some cause we may not be able to account for. At least, some disturbance, mutilation, privation of such measure of apparently or really reasoning faculty as Nature has allotted to the brute creation, occasionally befalls individual animals under certain circumstances; witness, for instance, that species of delirium, madness or fury in dogs which is known to us (the Greeks, I believe, called it λύσσα) under the name of hydrophobia; and it is perfectly possible that, if over a self-stung scorpion a jury of its „peers“ could hold an inquest, they would unanimously deliver a verdict to the said effect: albeit, by the by, mad dogs never, as far as any credible statements have become known to me, make a direct attempt upon their own lives.

Fourthly, and lastly. But, however all this may be — and, perhaps, I ought to request the reader's forgiveness for having made so much ado about it —, what anti-suicidal argument, sensibly, consistently, tellingly *applicable to man*, can be evolved out of the position which e. g. Josephus, the shrewd and wily ancient Jew, and Rothe, the erudite and mystical modern Christian, have respectively laid down?

Granting most readily that some earnest and profound verity lay enshrined in yon כצלם אלהים (Gen. I, 26), I am very far from being amazed that a Paul (Col. I, 15) and a James (III, 9) should have re-echoed and sanctioned the age-hallowed proposition of their great national cosmogonist. The former, however, himself admits (vide Acts XVII, 28) that likewise several of the classical Pagan poets and thinkers had asserted something very similar, if not identical. I will take the liberty of referring the reader to the old Stoic philosopher Kleanthes' much-prized hymn to Zeus,¹⁾ and to one of the lofty lays of Pindar.²⁾ Nevertheless, so high-strained a similitude does not by any means convey anything very intelligible, nor can we be exactly wroth with those ancient Heathens³⁾

¹⁾ Lines 4, 5: ἐκ σοῦ γένος ἐσμεν, ἵσου μίμημα λάχοντες μοῦνοι, κ. τ. λ. By the by, was not he, perhaps, the ἀριστος των φιλοσοφων Lucian alludes to at the conclusion of his treatise in defence of images? ²⁾ Nem. VI, 1—9. ³⁾ Vide Vollejus' „Deos Hominis esse specio“ in Cicero de Nat. Deorum I, 18; but cf. ibid. also III, 27, 30.

or modern Christians¹⁾ who, on being called upon to define it, experienced a strong temptation to reverse it by opposing that presumptively „man created God after his own image“, just as, for instance, in Homeric Theology²⁾ there is a complete transfer of the arrangements and customs of the Heroic Ages to the State of the Gods. — In a word, no mere figurative phrase can possibly reveal or explain satisfactorily and validly that boundary which separates man from the so-called mere brute. Moreover, whoso will compare e. g. a Bosjesman (I judge from the samples of living Caffres I saw exhibited, several years ago, in England), whose language sounded to me only semi-articulate, whose appearance seemed but one remove from that of an ourang-outang, and whose instincts and habits are said to border pretty closely upon those of the brute creation, with a docile elephant, a faithful dog, or a tricky ape — might be pardoned for hesitating a moment to acknowledge at first sight — of course, I am speaking only of *this* life, and *death* renders all bodies equally helpless and loathsome, and what's *beyond* is an unsolved problem — any very essential and wondrous difference between *him* and *them*, any anima rationalis and anima spiritualis in him superadded to the anima vegetativa and the anima sensitiva which they too possess. At any rate, most of the high-sounding changes which have been, time out of mind, rung upon the Mosaic vague צלם with the somewhat debateable plural אלהים by Jewish³⁾ and Christian divines (vide the catalogue of all imaginable mental, moral and physical intelligence, purity, felicity in any orthodox Catechism that may happen to be within your reach) have not struck me as being of a character to make honest skepticism tremble before their authority. Indeed, speaking for myself, I am sorely puzzled, whether I meditate on Paul's transcendently mystical intimation about ἡ χρίσις (Rom. VIII, 19) or endeavor to realize the exceedingly unmythical „Vestiges of the natural history of Creation“, or let pass in review before myself all the technical terms and fine similes with which philosophy and theology have so liberally supplied us, — sorely puzzled, as I said, to understand what Reason and what Instinct is, in what the distinction between them

¹⁾ E. g. Lichtenberg, *Sammtliche Werke*, B. I, p. 56. ²⁾ Vide e. g. Iliad, I, 533—535, etc. etc. ³⁾ Vide e. g. M. Fischel's self-complacent and would-be original exposition in the Jewish Chronicle, 1850, Jan. 18 and 25.

consists, and where the one commences and the other terminates. Yet, if we must, unless everything in and around us is to become infinitely more enigmatic than it already is, conceive man as, if in one sense a mere animal, in another sense no animal at all, consequently, altogether unique, *sui generis* even in comparison with the most intelligent and noble of non-man-animals, it follows that neither what *they* do nor what *they* leave undone constitutes or can constitute a standard by which what *he*, in his *essential*, not only comparative, difference, ought to perform or to omit may be tested. Therefore, since philosophical (at all events, modern christian ethical) writers insist upon denying to any and every mere animal as such e. g. knowledge of good and evil, the possession of moral liberty, a consciousness of responsibility, the hope or fear of another state of existence, and whatsoever else may inhere in such „thoughtful breath“ as man breathes, it must be morally indifferent whether the tiger or the lamb ever destroy itself or do not. Neither can guilt attach to the commission, nor innocence be bound up with the omission. Nay, more than this: *if argue we must*, might not, as regards man, the very will and power to commit suicide, and the very occurrence of this act, be viewed as one of those *δυνάμεις* (to use a Platonic expression) and rights which specifically characterize his humanity, and thus place him *above*, instead of „beneath“, the non-human animal? — Only beings that are different in degree, not such as are different in kind, can be legitimately compared one with the other.

But, proceeding to the only remaining phenomenon which the so called „Law of Nature“ can solicit attention to — as far as our immediate theme, or, perhaps, any other theme, is concerned —, we come to man himself, but man in what we are wont to call a „state of nature“, i. e. *savage* or *barbarian* man, whereby we must be supposed to mean our race in its infancy, its natural liberty, its human animalism, so to speak; or, in other and more distinct words, man on the lowest stage of what is usually termed civilization, on which same stage we assume Reason to have developed itself only more or less partially and imperfectly, systematic citizenship not to have been yet arrived at, and a legally organized social corporation to be still unattained to.

Stäudlin (p. 5 of the booklet specified in the Preface): „Der Mensch in dem unverdorbenen Zustande der Natur weiß nichts von

dem Selbstmorde, eben so wenig als von andern unnatürlichen Handlungen.“ An anonymous English writer.¹⁾ „Suicide is one of those crimes which we are led to believe *not common* among savage nations.“ On these two dicta which are not exactly of the same import, but both of which would seem to design to represent suicide as quasi a mere anti-natural excrescence of refinement or monster-birth of speculation, and each of which may be found repeated in numerous modern anti-suicidal Tracts, we will now offer some few comments, beginning with Stäudlin's assertion.

This Doctor and Professor of Divinity, as I intimated already in the Preface, half-way inclined during the latter portion of his over-fertile literary career to be supra-naturalistish or orthodox: therefore, since the third chapter of the Genesis must have possessed some measure of authority in his sight, we may experience a certain amount of difficulty in understanding what he meant by „unverderben“ (unverderbt). At any rate, it seems somewhat infelicitous when proceeding from the lips of a Theologian ex professo. We may readily take for granted that neither Adam nor Eve committed or — despite Milton's authority (vide §. 17) — contemplated suicide *before* what is generally called their Fall; but after their *Fall* human nature, according to our Judaico-Christian bodies — in which occasionally mind is wanting — of Divinity, ceased to be „uncorrupted“, so that we in reality do not possess any knowledge or experience at all concerning what man „knows“ and practises, or does not know and practise, in an „uncorrupted state of nature.“ Of course, if man *had remained* in that perfectly wise and good and happy state in which, according to the Lutheran Catechism and the Symbolical Books, he was originally created and placed, we must presume that he would have had as little inclination, as he would have had temptation, to put an end to his life. But, leaving aside all Patristic and Scholastic theories about yon primeval Fall in Eden's Garden, and about *imputed* guilt and *inherited* curse, which same theories our modern philosophers have occasionally managed to accommodate themselves to by girding, not without some assistance from the kindred Pagan dreams and fables touching a „Golden Age“, around them „fig-leaves“ of speculative symbolisms, nothing can be more certain than this: in every age

¹⁾ Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. XX, p. 797.

and in every region, of which any historic record has reached us, a certain amount of misery was and is prevalent, and a certain amount of crime existed and exists, so that suffering and sin never were nor are absent where man was or is present. Therefore, inasmuch as or as far as suicide may and must be viewed as a divergence from virtue and a flight from discomfort, was it and is it not likely to occur wherever and whenever evil and wretchedness have found a habitation? True, in human nature as such also „love of life“ and „instinct of self-preservation“ have been implanted, and they constitute strongly counter-acting influences; yet, would they, judging from everything the experience of our own hearts teaches us, not be likely and certain to become occasionally overpowered by other motives and other passions, unless highest wisdom and truest holiness should intervene? Consequently, the argumentative gain would not be very great in Stäudlin's favor, if we, as we, no doubt, must, assume that he meant to imply by the term „uncorrupted state of nature“ simply a freedom from, ignorance of, such customs and habits, indulgences and luxuries, arts and sciences, speculations and doubts, vices and crimes as we generally suppose to follow in the train of a limited degree or a considerable measure of civilization and culture. Take, by way of example, that state in which the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands were found by the first European and American sailors and — missionaries who, by the by, since 1820 would seem to have rendered it a *very different one!!*¹⁾ — *Reasoning a priori*, we would say: unto man in such a state of nature physical well-being, sensuous enjoyment are and cannot but be the chief law and motive; and, if they be so, it is utterly impossible, judging from all narratives on record, that, howsoever free, happy, pure in the abstract the said state of nature may be, the one or the other individual should not become grief-worn and lonesome, should not grow aged and decrepit, should not be wont to let the inborn passions of pride, of anger, of resentment, of sorrow, of love work and reign in his soul with native,

¹⁾ The reader who is interested in this difference, as far as *Missionaries* are concerned, is requested to ponder what stands printed under the title of „ein Streiflicht auf das Missionswesen“ in the Number Juni 7, 1855 of the *Beobachter*, ein Volksblatt aus Schwaben. Among our sanctimonious drivelling Missionaries there are *fools* and *rascals* enough; and the more it is to be lamented that the public are so easily gulled by pious professions and deceptive diaries.

unsubdued, unbridled, unrefined force: and pray, how should the one or the other of such individuals *then* find in thought resources which might enable them to forget actual discomforts over ideal activities? or, how should they meet with support and protection from the young and strong, since, judging again from all narratives on record, filial reverence is rarely known, and the hand of gentle charity has rarely raised asylums for the diseased and helpless? or, how should they not incline and determine to make their escape by the means always at their bidding, easy and quick, in the trying hour of insult, or disappointment, or injury, or abasement? — And, indeed, a *posteriori* testimony but too fully bears out that they not infrequently do thus incline and determine, as we will now endeavor to show by way of pointing out the utter groundlessness of yon anonymous English writer's belief that suicide is not common among savage nations.

At the very outset of this enquiry of ours, however, let us dwell for a moment on the self-evident fact that we really know little or nothing at all about the Law of Nature as an *immediate* agency in any given ethical direction or relation. The reason whereof is simple enough: we are not possessed of any documentary testimonies concerning the notions, customs, actions of any people *utterly* and *absolutely* in a State of Nature. It is true, sundry savage or barbarous tribes profess to be, like the Athenians of old, and imagine that they are, *autochthones*, a race engendered on and from the soil they inhabit, Melchisedek-like, as it were, without parentage or natural alliances, devoid of ancestry in extinct far or near groups of fellow-beings, or relationship with extant ones. But, I have every reason for believing, the closer researches of ethnographers into their traditions and characteristics would always seem to prove suchlike tribes to be merely a link broken off from some more or less remote chain of other peoples, and thence isolated into a secondary or tertiary process of self-development, not into a *primal* one, and which process, consequently, as far as we may be enabled to trace it backwards at all, doubtless commenced considerably this side of a state of *genuine, unadulterated* Nature.

However, as far as we can discern, the mandates of a code of natural law refer only to man's *physical* wants and desires, in regard to which the Law of Nature may safely be said to be one

and the self-same in and for human beings on any and every stage of their sojourn upon our habitable globe: when they are hungry, they eat; when they have thirst, they drink; when they want muscular exercise or must exert themselves for the supply of their daily wants, they wake and labor; when they desire and require relaxation and repose, they rest and sleep; and they „increase and multiply.“ Neither magisterial enactment, nor religious prescription, nor philosophical theorem, nought artificial, superinduced, systematic, no science, luxury, or fashion of any sort are needed to provoke and uphold suchlike things. They are invariable and universal, because a voice in the human breast, oracle-like, enjoins them, the necessities of the physical frame categorically enforce them, and man must forthwith cease „to live, move, and have his being“, unless he implicitly and without further questionings act accordingly.

If, on the contrary, we cross this Rubicon, and enter upon the territory of *ethical* principles and performances, a mighty and even a melancholy change quickly comes over the entire matter. But, ere we specifically take up our immediate topic, we'll glance at another not unkindred subject to which we already made a passing allusion a few moments ago, and of which we shall again be strikingly reminded, when we come to discuss the Legislation of the Greeks and Romans (§§. 34, 35).

If aught moral (parental, more especially maternal, love per chance excepted), surely, *filial* affection, and care for the *aged* and *sick*, would seem to us an inspiration of the voice of nature, one of the primary and chief commandments of Nature's Law. Indeed, some of the classical ancients already conceived it in this light. Thus e. g. Plutarch in more than one anecdotal passage; and Aelian says (H. Anim. IX, 1) expressly: διδάσκει δὲ ἡ φύσις, ἣ νόμων ἀνθρωπικῶν μέλει οὐδὲν, γίνεται δὲ ἄτρεπτος αὐτῇ νόμος. Nevertheless, what evidence has both ancient and modern story to offer on this topic as regards *savage* or *barbaric* peoples?

Herodot says ¹⁾ of the Massagetes. „Otherwise they do not fix the limit of life; but, if anybody has grown very aged, all his relatives assemble for the purpose of slaughtering him, and then they consume his flesh.“ And, when speaking of the Padaeans, a nomadic people in further India, the same far-travelled writer tells

¹⁾ Lib. I, c. 216. ²⁾ Lib. III, c. 99.

us that the men slay and eat the sick men, and the women ditto the sick women. Diodor the Sicilian, whilst speaking of the barbaric inhabitants of several islands, about the exact local habitation of which (one of them is Taprobane, the present Ceylon) the commentators (cf. Wesseling's notes) are not quite positive, relates as follows. ¹⁾ „The people are of extraordinary longevity so that they become even 150 years old, and remain mostly free from diseases. They compel, by a certain strict law, everybody who has lame limbs or in general any bodily frailness to take away his own life. It is likewise customary that each person should fix for himself a definite number of years, and having reached this goal (i. e. 150 years; for, even the king was then obliged to depart voluntarily), terminate his life by a strange mode of death. In the country a certain bastard-herb grows, and, if anybody lay himself thereon, it has the effect of making him fall imperceptibly into a gentle sleep and death.“ The same ancient historian, when speaking of the Megabari, a tribe of the so-called Troglodytes, narrates thus. ²⁾ „Those who, on account of old age, cannot any longer follow the herd, twist a cow's tail round their neck and take away their lives voluntarily. And, if anybody delay his own death too long, whosoever likes is at liberty to put, from friendship as it were, a rope round such a person's neck, and to strangle him amid kindly representations. In like manner, it is the custom among this people to put out of the world the frail, or such as suffer from incurable diseases. For they consider it the greatest evil, if anybody have love of life who, nevertheless, cannot do aught that is worth life. Therefore, all Troglodytes one sees are people with strong bodies, and in the prime of manly vigor; for, nobody among them survives his sixtieth year.“ Of the inhabitants of the island of Sardinia Aelian ³⁾ recounts: „there the custom prevailed that the sons beat their aged fathers, when the latter had once attained to an advanced age, with clubs to death, and buried them, because they deemed it disgraceful for a man at such an advanced age still to live, since he would commit many a fault, when his body was debilitated by old age.“ And, when speaking of the Derbices, the same compiler (ibid.) relates. „Among them all persons above seventy years of age are killed: the men are slain as sacrifices; the women, on the contrary, are hanged.“

¹⁾ Lib. II, c. 57, and c. 58. ²⁾ Lib. III, c. 33. ³⁾ ~~Hist.~~ Var. lib. IV, c. 1.

Strabo narrates¹⁾ the very same thing, and Prophyrius²⁾ still more circumstantially thus. „It is related that the Massagetæ and the Derbices consider those of their kindred to be most miserable who die spontaneously. Hence, preventing their dearest friends from dying naturally, they slay them when they are old, and eat them. The Tibareni hurl from rocks their nearest relatives, even while living, when they are old. And with respect to the Hyrcani and Caspii, the one exposed the living, but the other the dead, to be devoured by birds and dogs. But the Scythians bury the living with the dead, and cut their throats on the pyres of the dead by whom they were especially beloved. The Bactrii likewise cast those among them that are old, even while living, to the dogs. And Stasanor, who was one of Alexander's prefects, nearly lost his government through endeavoring to destroy this custom.“ Procopius,³⁾ recounts of the Heruli. „Neither persons who had become aged, nor such as had become sick, were permitted to be nursed and preserved alive; on the contrary, if anybody was attacked by age or by sickness, he was struck from out of the human race. The relatives piled up a heap of wood to a great height, placed the person on the top of it, and sent an Herulian who, however, did not belong to the family, against him; for it was considered wrong, if a relative became his murderer. But, as soon as the murderer of their relative had returned to them, they immediately set fire to all the wood, kindling the extreme ends first. When the flame had become extinguished, they gathered up the ashes, and hid them immediately in the earth.“ When speaking of the Guanchos, the aborigines of the island of Palma, Glas⁴⁾ informs us. „They were extremely alarmed in time of sickness; so that when any one was taken ill, he sent for his friends and relatives, and said to them Vacaguare, i. e. I want to die. Upon which they carried the sick person to a cave, where they laid him down upon a bed of goat's skins, put a pitcher of milk by him, and then, closing the mouth of the cave, left him to expire by himself. Crantz⁵⁾ relates what follows of the Greenlanders. „Sucklings are buried alive with the mother. Many aged, sick widows, who have no respectable opulent relatives by whom

¹⁾ Geogr. libb. XI et XV. ²⁾ De abstinencia, lib. IV, c. 21, ³⁾ De bello Gothico, lib. II, c. 14. ⁴⁾ History of the Canary Islands, 1764, p. 139. ⁵⁾ Geschichte von Grönland, 1770, B. I, p. 302 and cf. p. 217.

they could be without trouble supported, are likewise buried alive; nor do the children consider this a cruelty, but rather a benefaction, because they spare them the pains of a lingering bed of sickness, from which they would doubtless not rise again, and themselves grief, affliction and compassion. But the real cause must still be sought for in contempt, indolence and sordidness, since an example might not easily be found that they bury an old useless man, unless he should not have any relatives at all; they rather let him sit alone on some island and die of starvation."

After which somewhat prolonged side-glance, which would, however, admit of considerable extension, we will now fix our eye upon the topic of our direct enquiry.

That presumptively earliest book in national Hebrew literature, of which mention has already been made in this §, no matter, whether it be or be not the most ancient historical document extant, is unquestionably a most venerable and interesting document, though no careful student need be told how extremely scanty its records are, and no unprejudiced thinker be assured that many of its memoranda and data have an unmistakeably mythical complexion. According to it, no sooner had man *fallen*, i. e. transgressed an express revealed prohibition, by following the general bent of his own inborn liberty (and thereby, as it were, passed over to that stage on which alone we have any knowledge of him, and can frame unto ourselves any clear conceptions about him) than *fratricide* occurs, an action, we should think, quite as unnatural and a crime quite as terrible as suicide (vide what we have said on pp. 63, 64 of §. 6). And the next few chapters of the identical memorial of the actions and traditions of so-called ante-diluvian mankind induce us to conclude that similar deeds of *murderous* violence were not infrequent at yon remotest period of story already (vide what is said on pp. 5, 6 of §. 47). Nevertheless, neither in the Genesis nor in the four succeeding Books which are generally, whether erroneously or not, ascribed to Moses, is the *first slayer of himself* introduced to us, and we are left to guess what his name may have been, and his motive, and the manner of his end. Nay, despite Rabbinical over-refinings (on which vide §. 47) and Karaeanic unwarranted generalizings,¹⁾ suicide is never once even so much as

¹⁾ One of the chief writers among the anti-Talmudical Jewish sect of the Karacans in a work belonging to the 15th cent. of our era discusses the

alluded to in the Mosaic documents concerning the generations which rose up after the great flood, the Jews in particular. From which same silence, now, Michaelis (in the work, *Mosaisches Recht*, quoted in §. 6) argues thus: „I presume that suicide must have been in his time either quite unexampled or, at any rate, extremely rare, so that it was better to regard it as mere lunacy (*Wahnwitz*), and rather not to name to the people at all a crime of such sort, lest anybody might hit upon committing it; for sometimes also the interdiction makes the sinner.“ A very gratuitous hypothesis, ¹⁾ if I mistake not (vide e. g. what will be incidentally stated said on p. 37 of §. 38), to which almost any one of the following *four* hypotheses might be opposed with a far greater semblance of correctness. Either Moses had not reflected on the matter at all; or, he did not consider it a crime; or, he deemed that sort of anxious, tough attachment to life as the „*summum bonum*“ — which, by the by, characterizes the Israelites up to the present day; and which is hinted at, approved of, and turned to a wise purpose in e. g. the promise appended to the commandment on filial duty —, a sufficient motive and safeguard to *his people* in this matter; or, he regarded the question as being of far *too purely* an ethical or metaphysical character to occupy a place in his prominently only social legislation in which even the still more important as well as still more spiritual, somewhat kindred, tenet of the immortality of the soul had not (vide what has been said in §. 3) found aught like a clear and developed shape.

Passing on from ancient Jewish Writ to the historiographers and geographers and anecdotists and poets of ancient Greece and Rome, whatsoever more or less barbarian or savage people they had come into contact with or concerning whom they had acquired more or less credible intelligence, of each and all of them they relate, unanimously, emphatically, minutely, that among them suicide was frequent and approved. Besides those specified on p. 38 of §. 39 I will here merely mention the Scythians, Thracians, Iberians. Nay, the elder Pliny, when speaking ²⁾ of the Hyperboreans — no

subject of suicide, when interpreting the sixth commandment; but we are not told in what manner. Vide Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, B. IX, p. 102 of the Bericht *s. v.* *Katár*. ¹⁾ Michaelis himself refers us to the well-known reason of Solon for not legislating against patricide. As regards Romulus and Rome in this same matter of patricide cf. Plutarch's life of Romulus, c. 22. ²⁾ H. N. lib. IV, c. 12, §. 26.

matter who they were, though the probability, taking due heed to what both ancient and modern writers have said about them, seems to me in favor of the ancient Skandinavians¹⁾ —, whom he evidently conceived as living in a most primitive and felicitous state of nature, lays great stress upon even a *habitude* of self-destruction among them.“ *Discordia ignota et aegritudo omnis. Mors non nisi satietate vitae, epulatis debilitoque senio luxu, e quadam rupe in mare salientium. Hoc genus sepulturae beatissimum.*“ — And, indeed, howsoever far back the said writers may go into the earliest and rudest ages of their *own* respective national story, suicide presents itself to them as a phenomenon anything but unlikely to have been usual. Let us think e. g. of what they tell us (vide §§. 34, 35) of Soloon and Aegeus in the time of Theseus, and of Amida in the time of Aëneas, of Romulus, and of Marius in the time of Numa; nor need we — leaving Mythology quite aside — overlook that (vide §. 17) old Homer himself lets Antilochos, when he found Achilles lonesomely wrestling with his grief over Patroklos' death, tearfully hold the hero's hands, „apprehending that he might otherwise pierce his own throat with his sword.“

In Section II, which is exclusively devoted to what we shall call Barbaric Paganism, testimonies of *modern* writers will be found about *modern* tribes which are as „barbaric“ or „savage“ as need be, e. g. the North American Indians, the Tartaric adherents of the Lama religion, the Paganic Siberian tribes of the Itälmenes and Kamschadals; here, however, by way of *at once* illustrating the point under discussion, also some few additional modern testimonies about the one or other different modern tribe that may be pretty safely affirmed to live in or under something closely resembling what most of us might be inclined to denominate a state of nature or the law of nature.

The pious missionary Cranz (lib. cit. B. III, p. 331) says of the Greenlanders „about suicide one does not hear much, except when they are afraid of being cruelly executed; and from haughtiness and obstinacy many a one starves himself or gets himself frozen to

¹⁾ However, for our present argument it might almost be indifferent, if these same „beyond the Northwinters“ nowhere existed any more than Herodot's peoples „without dreams.“ The Ancients themselves sometimes place them in the gold-rich North, sometimes in the bright East, and sometimes in the gentle West.

death.* — And Glas (lib. cit. pp. 78, 119) specifically affirms that it was not unusual for the peoples of Palma to starve themselves to death under any affliction of either body or mind, though he goes out of his way to censure certain rash and broad inferences as to a religious suicidal *custom* among the Canarians which Gomary had made in his History of the Indies, and which, by the by, may be found repeated in Falret, p. 69, and Knüppeln, p. 19, of their respective monographs. Verily, there is no necessity for exaggerating facts in this particular for the purpose of getting a firm foundation for argument. — Speaking of the but too well-known staple-commodity of modern slave-trade, Maupertuis says (in his already mentioned *essai de philosophie morale*, ch. 5) with a sort of Corneille-like dramatic sublimity. „Un vaisseau qui revient de Guinée est rempli de Catons qui aiment mieux mourir que de survivre à leur liberté“; and Elvert annotates¹⁾ on a peculiarly ingenious and heroic manner of self-destruction which is said to be prevalent among them, viz. the art of stifling themselves by „das Zurückschlagen der Zunge.“ At all events, slave-dealers and slave-holders have good reason to know to their vexation and cost that the imbecile, uncultured Blacks of the African coasts are perfectly familiar with suicide, and not a little prone thereto, both already on the voyage to their future Masters, and after they have actually arrived at the distant Plantations. Witness the following testimonies which I shall extract from a very recent book of travel,²⁾ and which the author supplies from the oral communications of a German slave-holder (M. Souchay) in Cuba, and of an English dealer (Mr. Butts) in free Negroes in British Guiana. „They poison their own children, and even themselves, in order to injure their Master.“ „Especially, native Africans sometimes become moody (mißmuthig) which leads even to suicide; the rage for the latter becomes sometimes epidemic, supported by the belief that they will return after death to Africa; he (Souchay) checked this evil by having the bodies of such suicides dissected; Spanish planters had recourse to the horrible means of planting the hands of the dead upon the grave, by this mutilation cutting off from them, according to the belief of the Negroes, the

¹⁾ Ueber den Selbstmord in Bezug auf gerichtliche Arzneysunde, 1794, p. 59.

²⁾ Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1844—1847, von Carl Grafen von Görz, 1853, B. II, pp. 41, 44, 49, and cf. also p. 56.

return into their native land." ... „Only one tribe, the Krumen's or Kumans, does not tolerate slavery, and the few who are surprised and dragged away by slave-dealers, are wont to leap into the water or to rip up their belly, in order to escape from this disgrace.“ — Explanation lies at this moment outside of the pale of our enquiry; else we might say some little about the very irascible constitution which is said to belong to the Negroes and the *taedium vitae* it may produce, or, about their strong predisposition to anger and vengeance and what it may easily lead to in moments of irritability and excitement, or about so-called *nostalgia*, homesickness, and the irrepressible grief and longings it may give birth to, or about slavery, this justly accursed institution and the various almost inevitable fatalities — fatalities which, methinks, the well-meant and pious womanly pathos of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is not the likeliest or wisest means to remove, and, as I said in §. 9 already, we might fully as well bethink ourselves first of the Slavery of our Whites at home — into which its curse issues; but we are now dealing with facts only, and who would be ready to deny that the African negro, whether at home or abroad, is and remains pre-eminently, if not a wild man, yet a Child of Nature? And, if the reader covet still further information touching the exceeding frequency of suicide among the African Negroes, I will refer him for this matter to a not very valuable essay, which was published more than sixty years ago¹⁾ under the title „über den Hang mancher Völker zum Selbstmorde“, and to the references therein given.

Let this little be enough in the shape of *historical* evidence to prove the baselessness of the assertion of an anonymous English Cyclopaedist ventured upon. We must, however, also allow ourselves to be detained for a few moments in order to elucidate its fallacy in a *logical* point of view.

Those very thinkers — I will begin by making this general remarkable literary statement — of both classical antiquity and modern times who looked upon Nature as the purest, supreme, and only authority and canon for the instruction and guidance of man, have never failed to consider suicide justifiable, or even to proclaim it laudable, in cases of urgency or provocation at all events. Thus,

¹⁾ In *Meiner's* and *Spittler's Göttingisches historisches Magazin*, 1788, Bb. 2, Stück 1, p. 109.

for instance, the Stoics of Greece and Rome (vide §. 29). Howsoever willing they were to admit, and although they often even inculcated, that self-preservation is one of the primary instincts of our animal organism, yet they established their favorite doctrine of the permissibility and nobleness of suicide, a doctrine they not only enthusiastically developed in theory, but also frequently exemplified by practice, upon that very fundamental principle of their philosophy „to live according to the Law of Nature“ (ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, congruere naturae cumque ea convenienter vivere). Thus, again, e. g. Holbach (vide §. 74) in the work he entitled specifically „le système de la Nature“ upheld, among other things, suicide as justifiable and commendable. And thus, finally, Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose main counsel was that man should return to Nature, whose chief endeavor was to aid man towards doing so, and who even most mistakenly and madly supposed the essence of Christianity to be favorable to this opinion and scheme of his, openly advocated the admissibility and rationality of suicide, and himself sincerely, as we believe, acted up to this item of his creed (vide §. 21).

Again reverting, by way of illustration, to what I previously advanced about the conduct of savage and barbarous children of nature towards the aged and sick, even though these be their own parents, let us observe in this matter the utter impotence of a so-called Law of Nature, though the very opposite might at first sight be expected. Thence, whensoever a keen-sighted legislator arose in olden times among an uncultured or semi-civilized people, one of the laws he made it his duty primally to promulgate had reference to filial reverence for parents, the aged, the helpless. Thus e. g. Moses and Solon; and they, doubtless, reasoned and inferred correctly. For verily! verily! we plainly discern from the painful particulars I have above recounted that at all times and among all nations something very different from the mere „Law of Nature“ is needed in this matter even; — is needed to teach man that it is not a *disgustful* spectacle to behold weak old age waiting hopefully, patiently for the Angel of Death, the soul in the meanwhile maturing and perfecting itself through resignation and suffering, even if, haply, in Time's second childhood, that it may the more fitly and readily reassume activity in Eternity's first phase of immortality; to teach him that it is not a *useless* spectacle to behold weak old age glancing backwards upon the varied scenes of Pastness,

the feelings mellowed by experience, the insights hallowed by trials, and lisping forth gentle lessons of hoary wisdom out of memory's treasury, even counsel, consolation, encouragement, guidance; to teach him that it is not a *burdensome* spectacle to behold weak old age gathering and garnering with feeble hand a harvest of ready and willing support and reverential affection from the vigorous and fruitful soil of youthful offspring, relatives and friends, into whose inner selves and outward lots it itself had in the years of elasticity genially planted the seeds of self-devotion and self-denial to which now an opportunity is afforded of blossoming forth into forbearance, patience, gratitude, and charity. — Aye, as I said, some such Mosaic or Solonic law is requisite *at all times* and *among all peoples*; for even we civilized European christians in this same 19th century still, to no inconsiderable extent, stand also in need of it, as they may quickly discern who will not wilfully blind themselves to the realities around them, and are bold enough to probe the core of society's heart. We may sorely marvel at, and indignantly condemn, the cruel principles and sickening practices I have above recounted, and with self-congratulation contrast therewith our own social condition. Aye, but does not, after all, Macbeth's „would fain, but dare not“ sometimes apply to us? The *natural heart*, perchance, covets the effect, and occasionally even the sense of divine religion itself would not prevent the cause of that effect, if the wholesome fear of human social law did not bid us shrink from it; nay, in spite of both religion and law, with their mollifying influences and obligatory enjoinders upon children and relatives, and in spite of the many philanthropic Institutions which secure to the age-stricken, the diseased and the destitute care and sustenance of some kind, the cause is not infrequently called into operation: and the one or the other Newspaper has to record how much of ghastly hypocrisy there lurks beneath the surface of our self-flattering or self-deceptive professions of superiority to the Savage and the Barbarian, and how feeble is Nature's Law alone, more especially in the lower and less educated classes of our European communities, to awe and paralyze even a parricidal hand.

And, why should not all this apply with equal force, and even with more than the same force, to the act of self-slaughter? I have already, a few pages back, touched upon psychological reasons for replying to this question in the affirmative, and they appear to me

not only tenable, but unanswerable. If it be, on the one hand, undeniable that love of life has been implanted in man, it is, on the other hand, manifest that it is and cannot but be of comparatively small avail or potency, when counteracted by pressures and passions of multifarious kinds. Therefore, though we should not be warranted in pronouncing the favorite talk of many moralists about man's natural aversion to suicide a mere phantom of their own conjuring up, we must take this matter of a „horror naturalis“ at all events cum grano salis, and own that mere Nature's Law in and by itself, whether we define it as life-love or death-fear, ever has proved and ever must prove but a very feeble and venal guard of the tree of human terrestrial existence against self-slaughter's approach and attack. Indeed, it may be fairly said that there is immanent in man a natural horror of but very little of what the generality of legal and religious codes of civilized and christianized society have interdicted and condemned, e. g. marriage between sisters and brothers,¹⁾ polygamy, exposure of (more especially, female or delicate) children, etc. Thence, it becomes the task of all true philosophy, issuing into established legislative rules of duty and order, to point out what is erroneous and perverse in natural man, and the task of all genuine religion, from which laws derive their vital nurture, to correct and purify the impulses and disinclinations of the nurtural heart of man, thus raising him into a more ideal world, and rendering him by clear insights and spiritual influences strong to resist and patient to endure. In other words, man has to rise into anti-suicidalism by rising out of a „State of Nature“ upwards unto trust in Divine Providence, belief in Social Duty, and realization of Self-respect. As a mere animal he *might* destroy himself, as a rational individual he *could* do so, and, yielding to manifold existent temptations, *would* and often — as the unequivocal, accumulated, unanimous evidence that has lain spread before us sufficiently proves — *does* do so; and it is mainly the „thou shalt not“ of a social code, a philosophic system, or a religious creed which, I ween, extracts from him, when strong cause for wishing to depart is at hand, a stern and triumphant „I will not.“

In conclusion, however, one point more. Supposing even a bare natural disinclination to suicide to be far more universal than

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Michaelis, *Rechtslehre*, S. 104.

it really is, yet it, if a *de facto* argument against suicide, would scarcely be necessarily a *de jure* one. At the utmost, if such natural aversion were *absolutely* universal, could Reason find herself called upon to discern therein a *germ* of a *moral* commandment; for impulses as such, and little more is understood by so-called mere Law of Nature, can hardly, methinks, be maintained to be the final tribunals of Duty, or the primal causes thereof. What is Instinct, is not *therefore* exactly Duty, and the *Instinct* of Self-preservation may consequently be something materially different from the *Duty* of Self-preservation. Pure ethical obligation must rather be regarded as something arising out of Reason and Conscience, which find, on all higher stages of civilization, their legitimate exponents in Law and Religion. — Ergo, those moralists seem to me radically at fault who lay so great a stress upon the presumed — and more especially since it is only presumed — natural horror of suicide as a cogent argument against its possible — which epithet I desire to urge here — ethical permissibility.

§. 15. Concerning Biographies of suicides.

Questionless, then, it must remain that, when yon day dawns on which, as we are told, all short-visioned human arguments shall be silenced by one final Divine Judgment, and Tempest and Flood, Earthquake and War will yield up their countless myriads of human victims, self-slaughter may fitly appear beside them to present its innumerable hosts of human votaries, votaries from out every land and age, class and religion. Thence, whether suicide belong to the phenomena on the night-side of our common nature or not, suicides merely as such, most tangibly, cannot be said to stand forth exactly as aught particularly wonderful or mark-worthy, whether they be Sovereign or Beggar, Prince or Peasant, Cardinal or Curate, Scholar or Craftsman, Philosopher or Poet, Chieftain or Hireling, Master or Slave, Saint or Outcast, Believer or Infidel, Gentile, Jew, or Christian: in brief, individuals so dissimilar in character and lot that the only points of resemblance between them are the sameness of nature and the identity of catastrophe. Verily, a throng as motley as it is dense! Nevertheless, three separate works have fallen into my hands which are devoted to „Suicide-Biographies“, or, profess to single out for biographical purposes „remarkable“ or

„celebrated“ Suicides. I allude to Spiess,¹⁾ Albrecht,²⁾ and Tzschirner.³⁾

In the four tiny volumes before us, Christian Heinrich Spiess treated his readers — for the most part milliners, shoplads, and kindred subscribers to second-rate Circulating Libraries — to a dozen or so of stories which, despite a sort of assurance to the contrary in the Preface, are palpably either wholly or partially fictitious, and the heroes or heroines of which, after having waded through a sufficient quantity of misery, and of mud too, at last commit suicide. M. Spiess who had been both an actor and an innkeeper, and managed to fabricate numerous dramas, novels, and tales, would appear to have possessed considerable skill in a species of pseudo-pathos and sensual sentimentality, so that the excellent Wilhelm Hauff once thought it necessary to pen an aesthetico-ethical sermon — the perusal of which afforded unalloyed edification to me — against him and similar cotemporary German fertile, shallow, and tasteless authors, e. g. Karl Gottlob Cramer, taking for his text: „beware;..... for they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.“ Therefore, I feel quite warranted in assuring my reader that he need not expect to extract any psychological insights, or to derive aught tantamount to genuine moral impressions, from the above-cited publication; nor can I conceal my surprise that such sorry trash should have found a French translator — yet I have handled a French translation thereof —, and should, additionally, have tempted anybody to turn plagiarist — yet M. Albrecht — I know nothing else about him — most certainly contrived to let an astonishing degree of kindred likeness prevail between his four tiny volumes — which I have likewise with patience and nausea read — and their Spiessish predecessors.

Widely different in contents, form, and tendency is the thin 8^o volume mentioned as the third in the foot-note. Indeed, when we recollect that Heinrich Gottlieb Tzschirner, whose literary firstling it was, subsequently became one of the most erudite and eloquent, courageous and meritorious preachers, teachers, and writers in the service of Light, Right, Liberty whom the first quarter of our cen-

¹⁾ Selbstmörder-Biographien, 1786. ²⁾ Neue Selbstmörder-Biographien, 1794.

³⁾ Leben und Ende merkwürdiger Selbstmörder. Nebst einigen den Selbstmord betreffenden Abhandlungen, 1805.

tury (he died 1828) can boast of, we might at once take for granted that, whether the theme he chose be exactly a felicitous one or not, and whether the selections he made be exactly the most judicious ones or not, the performance at issue, though so far outshone by his later writings that even Krug has neglected to enumerate it in the list of Tzschirner's works which he gives in his obituary sketch of his deceased friend and colleague, must amply reward the pains of a careful perusal. We therein find somewhat more than a dozen accounts of both ancient and modern suicides, extracted from authentic records, and commented on in that „ethico-critical“ spirit which the protestant divinity-students of modern Germany have fair opportunities imbibing of at purely secular gymnasia and from all-sided professorial prelections, whereas our own incipient clergymen stand but a poor chance of being thus intellectually enlightened and spiritually refreshed either in parson-herded public schools or at test-act-manacled and still semi-scholastically organized colleges. — To this unadorned, manly book I may have occasion to refer more than once in the course of the following Dissertations; but, if I should do so only or chiefly when I chance to differ from its author, I must be allowed to avow that such a procedure — which I shall adopt pretty often in*regard to other authors likewise — is meant merely to facilitate argumentation and to animate discussion, not by any means in the spirit of either invidious depreciation or puerile self-sufficiency. — In conclusion, however, a few cursory suggestions on the difficulties which would seem to me to present themselves in connexion with a collection of suicide-biographies in general. —

In the first place, it is not exactly very easy to select from out of the great number of more or less „remarkable“ suicides, whom historical, medical and even periodical publications introduce to us, the *most* remarkable ones, inasmuch as this epithet itself is a somewhat relative one, the purport and force of which would have, in a great measure, to be decided by the particular object the selector himself has in view. Perhaps, for instance, Bulwer was not wrong, when he ¹⁾ pronounced yon Assyrian monarch who, for two years besieged by rebel-governors, and seeing no means of rescue, burnt himself along with all his wives and treasures, after

¹⁾ England and the English, vol. II, p. 89.

having previously ordered for himself an Epikuric and Atheistic epitaph,¹⁾ „the most magnificent suicide the earth ever knew“; and sundry poets and artists have not without cause made his end a subject of dramatic and pictorial representation. Yet, who that cares chiefly about the deep innermost life of the soul, its strugglings and sufferings, its aspirings and despairings, could not ever and anon discover in the annals of the poor, whose chroniclers are mere penny-a-liners, suicidal instances far more — aye, magnificent, if you like the term, than Sardanapalus' was, because revealing what true royalty of spirit often inhabits the peasant's hovel or hut, and what titanic questionings are sometimes muttered in the garret or cellar of the mechanic? Verily, neither does life spin its most mystic woof, nor does death dance its wildest, or strangest, or grandest dance, in palaces and in halls. — And, in the second place, it is not exactly easy, when the selection has been made, to determine and portray those circumstances and characteristics which stood in proximate or immediate nexus with the action under mention. For, when a suicide is presented to us *as such*, we chiefly desire to learn how and why he became one, whether from matured motive or sudden resolve, whether from perverted judgment, or from overwrought sensibility, or from wanton sensualities which darken all intellectual vision and stifle the moral affections. Much, therefore, in his career, howsoever interesting in other respects, may be wholly indifferent in regard to the action at issue, whereas some otherwise not very striking incident that has, nevertheless, happened to become a turning-point on his inner or outer life-path, may challenge closest inspection and deserve elaborate analysis, supposing the said incident — and this is not always the case — to be known, or even knowable. And inasmuch as the ethical or psychological peculiarity attaching to the suicidal deed would rarely even warrant the biographer in reciting minutely all the particulars of his subject's earlier and earliest life, a certain meagreness and abruptness must almost necessarily pertain to suchlike sketches: moreover, since it is only the fifth act of the drama which exhibits the catastrophe, one may be misled into not unfolding *quite enough* of the previous acts to furnish due materials for a judicious and just verdict. — Finally, too, if with regard to any one action which most

¹⁾ Vide Diod. Sik. lib. II, c. 23, and cf. c. 27.

of us deem immoral or irrational, we must carefully discriminate between the doer and the deed, such a distinction is here, perchance, specially needed, since suicide shows itself in comparatively few noteworthy cases as a methodically prepared and inwardly necessary terminatory point; it is rather very, very often, as it were, like unto the only stain on an escutcheon, and sometimes too, as it were, like unto the only flower amid rank weeds. In by far the greater number of other ethical phenomena the antecedent actions constitute more or less safe guides for dispassionate judgment, whereas this final action not unfrequently seems most anomalous in relation to the agent's previous character and conduct, so that, though we should be sufficiently confident as to the right or wrong of the question *in the abstract*, some one individual *concrete case* may puzzle us not a little. For instance, was not the, haply, very calmest and most tenderly considerate suicidal death which the classical ancients have had an opportunity of panegyricizing,¹⁾ incurred by a man who had almost ever until then shown himself as one of the most effeminately debauched and treacherously unprincipled personages in even yon remorselessly degenerate age of Rome? I mean the Emperor Otho.

¹⁾ Vide, besides the historians Tacitus, Hist. II, c. 54, Suetonius, Othonis vita, c. 12, and Plutarch, in vita Othonis, c. 28, also the poets Martial, epigr. 32 of lib. VI, and Ausonius, in his monosticha and tetrastica de duodecim Caesaribus.

Introduction.

CHAPTER III. BELLETRISTICAL.

§. 16. Preliminary remark.

First of all, one word on the *word* „belletristical“ itself. It is, if we consult our Dictionaries, certainly not English, though belles-lettres is English, as the readers of Hugh Blair's once celebrated, but now justly obsolete, work cannot fail to know. The Germanizing and eccentric William Taylor of Norwich formed¹⁾ from that substantive the adjective „belles-tristical“, which is, however, somewhat clumsily long and, into the bargain, very inconvenient to write. The Germans use *belletristisch* to designate whatsoever comes under the head of polite literature, and I see no valid reason why we, who have already adopted the cognate (Greek) term „aesthetical“, and other equally graphic termini technici from them, should not denizen likewise the word I have employed. — But the thing itself is of greater importance than any mere titular word; and I, therefore, remark as follows upon what I purpose to bring forward in this our last Introductory Chapter. Many persons, before they become acquainted with, or who always remain ignorant of, those theorems and verdicts on suicide which ethical science has embodied in Philosophy, Theology, and Legislation, have manifold opportunity of familiarizing themselves with the spirit and tendency of such treatment as the topic of suicide has met with in the utterances of Poetry and Fiction; for such utterances are to be found in works to most of which even the uneducated and the young in

¹⁾ Vide his letter to Southey, anno 1799, communicated in Robberds' Memoir of him.

every land and town gain easy access and have frequent recourse, since circulating libraries, cheap reading-rooms, and mechanics' institutions of one sort or the other, often under very injudicious management and for purely mercenary objects, have, more especially of late years, come to enact an extremely significant and influential part in social life among ourselves more, for reasons easily divined, than elsewhere, perhaps. Were my purpose, however, a merely *practical* one, it would be sufficient, were I here to draw attention to, and to discuss, solely sundry well-known earlier and later Dramas and Novels, English, French, German ones more particularly; but, inasmuch as I have undertaken to write an ethico-historical Treatise, it seems indispensably incumbent upon me that I should let pass in review all such *leading* works of ancient and modern polite literature as have appeared to me to contain elements which throw light, whether genial or whether lurid, upon our theme, the very dismal darkness or sacred solemnness of which fitted it peculiarly for becoming a popular theme on the terrain of fictitious literature.

§. 17. The Epos.

We will *commence* with the Epos for two reasons: firstly, because it is by its nature, which pre-supposes a co-operation of Divinities and human beings, a belief in supernatural agencies moving in concert with rational persons, as well as by universal historical testimony, the *most ancient* form of minstrelsy; and, secondly, because we shall find suicide treated of in it, if not with greater frequency, yet unto stranger purposes, as it were, than in most other forms of poetry.

Whatever other conditions may be requisite for the creation of a great national Epos, *individuality* of thought is certainly not one of them; at least, it was not in ancient days, when the most significant epic poems, e. g. the Homeric Epics and the Lays of the Nibelungen and Gudruna, originated, touching which modern critical research has, as every student is aware, proposed and debated the question, whether one person was their author, or, whether they grew and developed themselves into their present shape gradually by aid of successive minds, and has pretty unanimously decided it with Wolf and Lachmann to the last-mentioned effect. Where, however, there is no oneness of conception, no individuality of thought, it

would be bootless and foolish to make any attempt at discovering any *direct moral aim*, or any *positive ethical view*. Therefore, we must not think of citing e. g. Homer as having purposed to teach this or that, or endeavor to trace and prove the personal convictions of the writer or writers of his poems on this or that point. But, nevertheless, we may and must quote the Iliad and Odyssey as embodying certain opinions and expressing certain feelings peculiar to, and characteristic of, the age in which those epics shaped themselves out of primary scattered fragments into glorious totalities; in other words, we may and must seek and find in them a species of *historic value* and *historic interest* in reference to certain tenets and sentiments. And what, in this point of view, applies to the Homeric epics, applies, though, of course, with modifications and restrictions, to the far *more artificial*, as well as the far more recent, Aeneis; for Virgil, as we shall see by and by, palpably fashioned his work upon the model of Homeric precedence, and merely desired to re-produce in Latin for the Romans what the more imaginative and plastic Greeks had, fortunately for themselves, won in a very different manner very many centuries earlier. — Both the Odyssey and the Aeneid touch upon the subject of our immediate enquiry, the latter, however, far more directly than the former, and even *apparently didactically*, but *really only representatively*, as it were. We must, therefore, produce their say, and comment upon it, though, if we had not to speak of the Aeneis at considerable length, we might and should have passed by the Odyssey in silence.

I. The Odyssey.

Odysseus, thereto commanded by Kirke, descended into Aïdes for the purpose of questioning and consulting the renowned blind seer and prophet Teiresias about the way and means of his return to Ithaka, that his wanderings might, it length, through this most difficult of his manifold trials, gain a favorable turning-point.¹⁾ (Similar descents, as everybody knows, though on other errands, are mythologically frequent, e. g. those of Theseus, Pirithoos, Herakles,

¹⁾ Rhaps. XI. The lines which the reader must chiefly bear in mind as the ground-work of what follows are 36—41, 51 sqq., 202, 203 as compared with Rhaps. XV, 359, 271—280, 489—491, 541—564, 569, 570, 475, 476, 601—604. Cf. also Rhaps. XXIV, 1—203 not forgetting, however, that critics have, from internal evidence, pronounced the first half of the latter Rhapsody anomalous, inappropriate, spurious. Vide Faesi, *Homeri Odyssea*, B. I, Göttingen, p. XXXI.

and upon them are moulded more or less, perhaps, the tales of the return of the dead to life, e. g. Adonis, Alcestis, Protesilaos, and cf. in §. 25 what is said of the Armenian Er in Plato's *Politia*.) After his entrance into the regions of the dead, he encounters all sorts of souls *pêle-mêle*; and the first of those who meet him, and are specifically mentioned, are Elpenor, his companion, who had recently died in Kirke's dwelling, and still lay unburied, and, therefore, solicits interment; then, his own mother, Antikleia, whom, upon descrying her, he asks: how she died? but who gives him only such negative answers as could not enable him to guess that she had perished by her own hand; after her, a considerable number of *female* shades, among whom are sundry suicides, e. g. Epikaste and Phaedra, the former's self-suspension being narrated with considerable minuteness, whereas no allusion is made to the manner in which the latter had come to her death. All the female shades having, at the bidding of Persephone, dispersed themselves from before him into the depths, Odysseus next beholds the souls of departed heroes, his companions in arms before Troy, e. g. Agamemnon, Achilleus, Ajas Talamonius, &c. Achilleus utters his own individual abhorrence of being in the realm of shades in words to the effect that „he would rather till the field as day-labourer for the lowly and thrifty farmer than reign over the whole troop of mouldered dead.“ Ajas, however, instead of mourning and complaining like the rest, is *alone* still wrathful, and — silent, in spite of Odysseus' praise of him and desire to console him and converse with him. Then, Odysseus perceives Minos who distributes *reward* and *punishment* to the dead, and Tityos, Tantalos and Sisyphos undergoing their respective tortures. Last of all, he espies Herakles, but existing in a fashion altogether peculiar to himself, and in itself, too, most peculiar: whereas, namely, Achilleus has specially declared that in Hades νεκροὶ ἀφραδέες ναίουσι, βροτῶν εἰδῶλα καμόντων, the εἰδῶλον (form?) of Herakles is in Hades, whilst he *himself* (his distinct soul?) dwells blissfully among the Immortals.

Speaking quite in general of the entire Homeric νεκρία, as put forth in the two Odyssean rhapsodies I have quoted, it has found but little favor in the sight of either *ancient* or *modern* writers, whether philosophically or practically considered, e. g. Plato,¹⁾ the

¹⁾ De Republica, lib. III at the commencement.

elder Pliny,¹⁾ Cicero,²⁾ Gibbon,³⁾ Heeren,⁴⁾ Blackie.⁵⁾ Nor unjustly so, methinks; for the abode and state of departed souls according to the Odyssean conception lacks all principle of common equity or common sense, is as chaotic and wild as it is unenjoyable and unjust. Nevertheless, two circumstances seemed to call upon us to analyse it so far, or, rather, so far to allude to it, viz. firstly: Virgil in lines which will by and by present themselves to our especial notice had, manifestly, a portion of the above speech of Achilles' in his „mind's eye“; and, secondly, Justus Lipsius (in the work which will be mentioned in §. 29, diss. XXIII in init.) places the said Achillean exclamation, oddly enough, at the head of his catalogue of anti-suicidal classical testimonies. „Ajo plerisque omnibus priscæ et veræ Sapientiæ, sententiam hanc damnatam (viz. the Stoic advocacy and commendation of suicide). Homero in primis: apud quem hoc votum exprimitur“ (viz. βουλοίμην — ἀνάσταν). There would, doubtless, have been some reason in making this quotation for the object at issue, if words to a similar effect had come from the lips of e. g. Ajas, Antikleia, Herakles, Epikaste; but Achilles had *not* died suicidally, and the only possible inference we could draw from his ejaculatory confession is this: that he himself, supposing he had *foreknown* the lot of the dead, would, in case he had felt himself tempted to suicide, very far from committing it,⁶⁾ have done his utmost to remain on earth as long as possible, even under the most adverse circumstances and in the most abject condition. And, inasmuch as, if we except Epikaste, the *suicidal* shadow-images are in no wise represented to us as *such*, we are, I ween, justified in affirming that the Homeric picture of the shadow-realm, in this respect differing in toto from the Virgilian partial copy of it, does not exhibit any vestige whatsoever of a specific punishment of suicide or suicides. All we could say in this point of view would, perhaps, be that, as Longinus⁷⁾ affirms, the silence of Ajas is sublimely managed, i. e. with psychological verity; that, as Cowper⁸⁾ suggests, the evasiveness of Antikleia is a proof of delicacy of poetic touch; and that, as Lucian⁹⁾ makes clear, the matter of the twofold Herakles is, turn it as we may, sheerest absurdity.

¹⁾ H. N. lib. 30, §. 2. ²⁾ T. Q. I, c. 16. ³⁾ Decline and Fall, ch. XV. ⁴⁾ Historische Schriften, B. III, p. 216 ff. ⁵⁾ Classical Museum, 1853, in the essay on the Theology of Homer, Proposition XIX. ⁶⁾ Cf. II. 18, 34. ⁷⁾ Vide his de Sublimitate, c. IX. ⁸⁾ Vide his notes in his translation of the Odyssey. ⁹⁾ Vide the 16th of his dialogi mortuorum.

However, there is, perhaps, a point of sight from which we might almost feel ourselves tempted to regard this entire Lay of the wanderings and adventures of our home-sick hero no less than certain individual passages in it as bearing witness against suicide: in some such manner, for instance, as the Hebrew mythical Epic, or, rather, dramatized epico-didactic Theodiceæ, the book of Job,¹⁾ has been supposed and declared to have an anti-suicidal tendency, and to contain anti-suicidal utterances. Just as we see the hero of his Hebrew poem, woven, probably, out of some ancient Arabian popular legend, enduring every ill to the last, and not yielding to either the occasional temptations from within or suggestions from without (if such be therein, as some interpreters would fain prove) to escape from his sufferings by a voluntary death: so Maximus Tyrius (in several of his Dissertations, vide §. 31) would seem to incline to regard the whole Odyssey as the depictment of an effort on the part of Odysseus to save his own life (and the lives of his companions); and, doubtless, also several isolated passages occur in it, the fortitude-inspiring tendency of which Plato himself has not failed to extol, and the indirectly and inferentially anti-suicidal moral beauty of which is worthy of attention.²⁾ For instance, what Odysseus says amid his perils on the ocean,³⁾ or, what the lily-armed Nausikaa reminds him of,⁴⁾ or, — even far more relevantly and decisively still — what Odysseus narrates of himself, after his companions had, from wanton curiosity, opened the bag of Aeolus, and the impetuous winds had cast his vessel away from the very shore of Ithaka into the high seas again, in the following lines:⁵⁾

αὐτὰρ ἔγω
ἐγρόμενος κατὰ θυμὸν αὐμόνα μεμνήριζα
ἦε πεσὼν ἐκ νηὸς ἀποφθιμὴν ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
ἢ αἰών τλάιην καὶ ἐτι ζωῶισι μετέιην.
ἀλλ' ἐτλην καὶ ἔμεινα.

II. The Aeneïs.

Though there be none in the Odyssey, yet there is in the Aeneïs a species of psychologico-theological exhibition of the world-

¹⁾ Vide Sect. IV. ²⁾ But, the ancient Greeks themselves must not be supposed to have found aught resembling anti-suicidal ethics in the Homeric writings! (as little as did the ancient Hebrews in the book of Job). Thence, for instance, one of their many myths about the presumptive Homer lets him die suicidally: a baseless story, no doubt, and only in so far deserving of mention as we may feel inclined to remember it, when we come to speak of Kalchas, Servius, Orpheus, &c., to whom the same death has been by some of the ancients ascribed. ³⁾ Rhaps. V, 447, 448. ⁴⁾ Rhaps. VI, 188, 189. ⁵⁾ Rhaps. X, 49—53.

judgment in a future state of existence, and in this same exhibition there occurs a sort of development of the destiny of suicides. We will, however, first of all accompany Aeneas on his well-known subterranean excursion by way of picturing to ourselves *topographically* the Virgilian Hades on its successive stages from the confines nearest the entrance, i. e. nearest the earth, unto its turning-point into Tartarus. Having arrived at a locality on *this* side of Tartarus, he beholds the following sights in the following order: various horrid forms; souls roaming about and soliciting Charon to ferry them across the Styx, their bodies having remained unburied; — after having crossed the Styx, and charmed Cerberus into sleep — the souls of infants; further on — the souls of such as had been innocently condemned to death; and — further on still — the souls of *suicides*. Ere he reaches Tartarus proper, where criminals dwell, he falls in with two other sets of souls still further on, i. e. *nearer* Tartarus, viz. the souls of unhappy lovers, among whom, by the by, also sundry suicides are specifically mentioned, but not designated as suicides,¹⁾ e. g. Dido, Evadne, Laodamia, Prokris, Phaedra, Eriphyle; and — farther on still — the souls of renowned warriors, among whom many Greek and Trojan heroes are adduced by name. — In the *Elysian* fields which he subsequently reaches, Aeneas meets with e. g. his own father, Anchises (who, by the by, had refused to let himself be rescued after the fall of Troy, and was resolved to lay violent hands upon himself,²⁾ just as many of the Trojan combatants had leapt from anguish of despair into the flames).

Jortin³⁾ has devoted a lengthy treatise to a minute and scrupulous investigation into the relative bearings of the localities specified in this mythico-poetical delineation of the nether world, and the outline or substance of the results he has come to is thus: the first state is that of exclusion, viz. for the unburied; the second, that of introduction, viz. for suicides, unhappy lovers, renowned warriors; the third, that of purification, i. e. a kind of Purgatory; the fourth, that of punishment, viz. Tartarus; and the fifth, that of recompense and felicity, viz. Elysium.

¹⁾ Lib. II, 634, 644, and cf. 565. ²⁾ Consequently, Giphanius is wrong, when he (in his commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics, as quoted in §. 26) says that Virgil, in the passage we shall presently quote, is giving examples of such as had destroyed themselves from love („*exempla de amore*“). ³⁾ Six Dissertations on various subjects, 1764, the last dissertation.

What, now, our Latin poet says of the doom of the souls of suicides is contained in these half dozen descriptive lines:¹⁾

„Proxima deinde tenent moesti loca, qui sibi letum
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas. Quam vellent aethere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!
Fas obstat, tristisque palus inamabilis unda
Adligat, et novies Styx interfusa coercet.“

Did Virgil, then, purpose to intimate that suicide is a *crime*, and is as such more or less *penally* dealt with in a future state? This is the main and sole question we have here to ask; and it has been answered in the affirmative by considerably the greater number of those writers with whose opinions I have become acquainted, though they are not unanimous about what we might call the specific degree of punishment intended by the Poet.

Servius (in the commentary quoted in §. 9) says ad 434: „Ideo moesti, quia, ut diximus supra (IV, 653.) secundum Platonem, *graviter puniuntur* eorum animae, qui sibi inferunt mortem“; and in the latter passage, to which he himself refers us, he, whilst commenting on „vixi“, says: „excusat vitae abruptio: quia dicit Plato *magna poena* affici animas eorum qui vitam ante tempus relinquunt.“ — Warburton (B. II, sect. 4 and elsewhere in the work quoted in §. 9) utters a similar verdict, designating the Virgilian abode of suicides as Purgatory, by which term he wishes us to understand something like what he calls the Hela of the ancient Scandinavians, a locality between Gimle and Nastrond. But, on the one hand, the Bishop's definition of the matter on the basis of Odinism is not by any means clear to me; for, despite all the obscurity which involves much of the mythology of the Edda, Hela (or Niflheim) was, according to the younger Edda, *not* „a place of punishment“ at all, but simply = *scheol*, *hades*, since there are nowhere vestiges of the belief that Hela punished the vices of the wicked, her realm being, rather, the temporary abode for all who had died of diseases (as Walhalla was for all those who had fallen as heroes in the strife), and was to remain so until the destruction of the world by Surtur's flame which was to annihilate Niflheim also, and at which period the good were to be separated from the wicked, the former

¹⁾ Lib. VI, 434—439. The other lines in this Canto to which the reader's attention must be directed are 607—610, 637sq., and 659—663.

to be transplanted into the delightful Gimle (Heaven, Elysium), the latter to be cast away into the everlasting torments of Nastrond (Hell, Tartarus). Until which period, all of them dreamt away their lives there in inactivity and tranquillity.¹⁾ And, on the other hand, suicides are, according to Virgil, — for I fully agree with Jortin on this point — not *even* in Purgatory. — Addison,²⁾ also characterizing the locality, in which our poet has placed suicides, as Purgatory, says that Virgil thereby marks suicide as a „heinous crime.“ — Mackensie (in his §. 9 quoted works, II, p. 109) declares without further modification that the Latin poet has placed suicides in „Hell“; nor has even Blumauer failed³⁾ to let, by way of travesty, the Judges down below deliver Werther „per unanimitatem Æuſſel.“ Cf. also Voltaire, Bishop Pearce, Barbeyrac &c., the latter of whom indulges in a pathetic and long-spun say about „*rigorose pene in altera vita*“, with which the Heathen were threatened by their *Religion*, on the strength of the passage before us.

But, by far greater has appeared to me the authoritative weight of critical discernment and dispassionate judgment on the part of the small minority of writers who interpret our passage very differently; and the following few testimonies and details will, I ween, prove sufficient to counterbalance and invalidate the numerous votes for torture, punishment, exquisite misery.

Jortin (ubi supra, pp. 258 and 254): „the suicides are left for the present (the poet has not told us how long) to the natural result of their separation from the body, and with a continuance of the same passions and affections which they had upon earth.“ The *chronological* fixation which Jortin here misses we may, however, perhaps get at by referring to a somewhat lengthy note of Servius' which I will quote entire from Lion's edit. of his *Commentarii*.⁴⁾ „*Omnibus, &c.; dicunt Physici biothanatorum animas non recipi in originem suam, nisi vagantes legitimum tempus fati compleverint: quod poëtae ad sepulturam transferunt: ut (Aen. VI, 329) Centum errant annos. Hoc ergo, nunc dicit Dido: Occisura me ante diem sum, vaganti mihi dabis poenas. Nam te persequar [et adero quamdiu*

¹⁾ However, we shall have to return to this ancient Northern Eternity which had Alfadur for its Origin, Odin and his Aasen for derivative Good, and Loke and his Elves for derivative Evil, when we arrive at Vol. II, Sect. II.

²⁾ Taddler, Nr. 152 and Nr. 154. ³⁾ Vide his in every respect objectionable *travestire Æneide*. ⁴⁾ Gottingae, 1826, vol. I, p. 286.

erravero] semper; si autem fuero recepta in originem, poenas tuas audiam, quas videre non potero. Hic ergo (totus) sensus est, si (visis rogalibus flammis) tempestatem evaseris flammarum rogalium, umbra mea te persequetur; sic et hanc evaseris, vel recepta audiet famam suppliciorum tuorum.“ Which threat of Dido's to haunt her faithless lover is only a proof, if one were needed,¹⁾ that among the ancient Romans the very same superstitious belief in ghosts existed which continues to possess the less educated communities of the isolated rural districts of christian Europe.

But to proceed. Virgil, as we have seen, represents the souls of infants, and of those who, though innocent, had been condemned to death, as sharing the same place and fate with those who had slain themselves. No doubt, now, since a certain tertium comparationis between those three classes of souls is absolutely necessary to make any sense at all of our poet's verdict, the *prematureness* of death is that point of resemblance which Virgil must be presumed to have borne in mind. As a *somewhat* parallel juxta-position I might quote the following passage from one of Lucian's writings.²⁾ „Perhaps, it is the opinion of Tychiades that only the souls of those roam about who have died a violent death, e. g. of those who have hanged themselves, or have been decapitated, crucified, or removed out of the world in some other similar manner; but, on the contrary, not those who have died a natural death.“ Also in Porphyrius' *de abstinentia* we shall find (vide §. 32) a passage in which Plotinus says that the souls of the violently killed, whether self-slain or slain by others, promiscuously remain with the corpse. Indeed, Jortin says in so many express words: these three sets of deceased are, according to Virgil, simply „such as had shortened their days, or had not lived their appointed time according to the common course of nature.“ Nor otherwise Gibbon.³⁾ We, therefore, ask: is it possible to imagine that Virgil intended to represent the souls of infants, and of those who, though innocent, had been condemned to death, as *culpable*, and as *suffering punishment*?

Of the latter we may, surely, affirm that, if any person may, so

¹⁾ Vide e. g. what the poet Propertius lets his Cynthia say to him lib. IV, eleg. 7, 89—91 „nocte — reverti“, and cf. Frøberg's introduction to this elegy and the references there given, *Römische Dichter*, Band 32, p. 439.

²⁾ Philopseudes, *Opera*, edid. Lehmann, vol. VII, p. 270. ³⁾ *Decline and Fall*, vol. IV, p. 237, note 208.

to speak, he said to have a claim upon a species of compensation in a future state of existence, it is a being whose mortal career has been cut short by the injustice and barbarity of his fellow-man.

And, as regards the souls of infants, we shall learn on a later occasion (§. 25) that Plato (Polit. lib. X) wisely and delicately lets von Pamphilian Er, who had visited the yonder-world, be silent upon what he had seen respecting *their* fate. Which same wise brevity and delicate evasiveness of the pagan mythographer's our christian theologians would, methinks, do well to imitate, instead of speculating and dogmatizing about the salvation or damnation of infants baptized or unbaptized. Perchance, the gifted and gentle Swedish seer, Swedenborg, was correct,¹⁾ when he calculated that „of infants a third part of heaven consists, i. e., as he himself subsequently explains his own meaning, that a third part of heaven is a sort of infant-training-school for heaven; perchance, a poet-fancy might suggest that the angels are fond of playing with children; perchance, a parental heart might believe that „our Father which is in Heaven“ loves to be environed by infants; and, perchance, a philosophic mind might be positive that „the God of all Intelligences“ has in his „many mansions“ a fit and proper habitation for infant-minds and infant-hearts. But, be this as it may, three things seem to me to be certain. The first is: that τῶν δὲ εὐθὺς γενομένων καὶ ὀλίγον χρόνον βιούντων περί ἄλλα ἔλεγεν οὐκ ἄξια μνήμης of Plato's was a pertinent utterance. The second is: that christians would act more christianly, were they rather simply to work at educating *living* infants for Eternity, at developing in them holiness, wisdom, strength, efficacy, than to busy their forecasting brain about the fate of *dead* infants in Eternity. And, the third is: although certain divines have, for the honor and glory of the consistency of their silly systems, food for fools, proclaimed e. g. infants who die unbaptized necessarily abandoned unto perdition, our Heathen poet was so devoid neither of thought nor of feeling as to assign, seriously and sweepingly, a place of misery and torture to any deceased infants whatsoever.

Furthermore, we must not forget that Virgil expressly speaks only of such suicides as were „insontes“: by which epithet he, of course, cannot mean to convey that *all* suicides are so, since in his own age and city many who had died suicidally had lived ini-

¹⁾ Vide his Visions of Heaven and Hell, p. 6.

quitously; and, therefore, we should have to suppose that he waives all allusion to worthless and infamous persons who had also died by their own hands, and purposely singled out from the genus of suicides the most guiltless or least guilty species, if we do not allow ourselves rather to suppose that suicide *as such* was neither *moral* nor *immoral*, was, so to speak, an ἀδιάφορον, in his estimation. *Insontes*: „nullo crimine polluti, sed taedio vitae; propter aerumnarum molem, qua oppressos se videbant“ — thus Servius felicitously, as I think, paraphrases the term; and, approving and adopting this paraphrase, we find ourselves called upon to think of such persons only as had made their voluntary escape out of life in consequence of, for instance, a temperament over-heavily laden by natural organization, or, of such acute feelings and fastidious views as had rendered them too delicate and sensitive to be willing and able to endure and overcome external trials. Perhaps, Augustinus was, therefore, not merely stretching a point, when he reckoned¹⁾ even a Lucretia to the class of Virgil's „insontes“; and, if our Poet had been a Christian, the said churchfather would, I presume, with equal justice, have declared him to mean by „insontes“ also, among others, such christian virgins and matrons as had committed suicide from a motive not essentially dissimilar from that which had actuated yon Roman heroine. At all events, the epitheton under discussion implies the absence of all moral guilt, the suicidal deed itself excepted; and, moreover, involves a declaration, as I take it, that by mere suicide in and by itself the persons under mention had not committed a crime, had not incurred guilt, were still, to all intents and purposes „insontes“, and, therefore, could not deserve punishment; and, consequently, I find myself called upon to subscribe to Gibbon's verdict which he, however, does not trouble himself to argue²⁾ (*ubi supra*): „suicides are enumerated by Virgil among the unfortunate, rather than the guilty.“

¹⁾ De civit. Dei, lib. I, c. 19. When we come to discuss patristic literature, we shall learn what else Augustinus broaches in connexion with this matter, and here content ourselves with intimating that we do not exactly agree with him on this part of his views. ²⁾ The reader may remember that, besides the occasional glances at this Virgilian poem in his *Decline and Fall*, Gibbon wrote an elaborate essay (*Miscellaneous works*, vol. II, p. 497 ff.), in which he controverts and, as I think, successfully subverts Warburton's view that the descent of Aeneas was intended to convey a representation of the Eleusinian mysteries; but in this treatise he has not reverted to the question now before us.

But I will now fairly state also what has appeared to me the strongest, and indeed the only, objection to the opinion we have just arrived at. Addison (*ubi supra*) supposes Virgil to have been a Platonist, and that „insons“ here signifies *having had no real motive at all*, but, on the contrary, ejecting the soul out of the body from sheer loathing of life and mere wanton thoughtlessness. Some little apparent ground for this view, which, by the by, Justus Lipsius, perhaps, also meant by his „*Virgilius Platonissans*“, might, perhaps, be found in the contemptuous form of the verb „*projicere*“, on the model of Aristotle's ἀποβάλλειν (if I recollect rightly, in his work *de anima*; but I owe this verbal reference to the notes in Valpy's edit. in usum Delphini). Servius explains it aptly by „*cum dilectu, quasi rem vilem*“, and it is certainly much more, at least, apparently scornful than e. g. Seneca's „*se emittere*“, and the invariable Stoic and even Neo Platonic ἐξάγειν ἑαυτὸν or with ψυχὴ as object, and the frequent intercalation of τοῦ βίου or τοῦ ζῆν, whence their stereotype expression ἐξαγωγή for suicide.¹⁾ According to Plato (*vide* §. 25), now, just suchlike *motiveless* ennui-suicide was the most, nay, the only, really criminal kind of self-destruction. Nevertheless, the entire context in which the „insons“ occurs, i. e. the *juxta-position* with infant-souls and unjustly condemned adults, seems to me to oppose the possibility of our conceiving that Virgil meant to consider their being „insons“ as an *intensification* of their culpability. — Jortin, on the contrary, endeavors to prove that Virgil was an Epikurist; and, if such were the case, there would be therein (*vide* §. 27) an insuperable difficulty to our convincing ourselves that our Latin Roman poet intended by the passage before us aught more than a mere intimation to the effect that the said „insons“ were in the realm of shades simply uncomfortable, e. g. from a consciousness of the folly and needlessness of their deathly deed. — But, I do not know in the least, upon what grounds it would be feasible to pronounce Virgil a disciple of either of the above mentioned philosophic schools, or, if you like, of any philosophic school. At all events, however, Platonism was far less prevalent at Rome in the age of Augustus than Stoicism and Epikurism, and the latter would appear to have been more suitable to

¹⁾ *Vide* Ashton's note, quoted on p. 121 of Gaisford's edition of Hieronymus' *Comment. in aurea carmina*, and cf. §. 23 of our Treatise where Gaisford reads αὐτὸν instead of αὐτῆν.

an erotic and idyllic poet, distinguished less by speculative vigor than by sensuous refinement, than the former. Vide what will be said on Horace §. 19. — Heyne,¹⁾ after having declared himself utterly at a loss to discover either the idea, or the legal authority, of the Poet in assigning to suicides the place and lot above described, conjectures that he had the work of some Pythagorean, e. g. Empedokles, before him, when he composed this passage, consequently, of a philosopher whom, if this incident be *curiositatis causâ* worth alluding to, antiquity generally supposes — for the accounts are not by any means uniform — to have died a voluntary death himself.²⁾ If the reader care to indulge in reflections of his own on the probability or improbability of this conjecture, he is requested to turn to old Brucker's well-known monument of German industry, and there inspect the theses of those works of Empedokles' „*qui hodie desiderantur*“, as you dry chronicler of the history of philosophy expresses himself.

However, there are sundry other passages in the Aenëis which we must enlist into the service of our immediate enquiry, and which will enable us to see more clearly that Virgil could not, consistently with himself, have intended to represent in the passage just discussed suicide per se as anything per se guilty, impious, and either likely or deserving to be dealt with severely in the regions of retribution.

The story of Dido³⁾ is to everybody „familiar as household words.“ She herself is made to extol her own suicidal end: „*et nunc magni mei sub terras ibit imago*“, though, of course, the said „*magnus*“ is here not to be understood in a *moral* sense, but only in the sense of illustrious, far-famed. Virgil, moreover, with poetical sympathy excuses her final deed as an act of *madness* („*nam — furore*“), in which lines the „*merita nec morte*“ manifestly signify: without having committed any flagrant act, so that she, too, would have to be numbered among the „*insontes*“; yet, to her Virgil as-

¹⁾ Vide his notae in his last large edition of the works of Virgil. ²⁾ If the well-known narrative about Empedokles deserve any credit at all, it would not be unreasonable to imagine that, as a scientific man, he had gone forth to explore the volcano, had in his zeal or ignorance fallen into the crater or lava, and that one of his *metallic* shoes, with which he had equipped himself for greater ease or safety, was subsequently found, having been carried into the sight of men by some natural accident. ³⁾ Lib. IV, especially line 654, with which cf. lines 696, 697.

signs, as we have already seen, a habitation *even somewhat nearer the confines of Tartarus*, i. e. among the unhappy lovers.

Less well-known, or, at all events, less noticed in relation to our topic, is Virgil's introduction of Cato Uticensis into his epos, perhaps, because some difference of opinion prevails among the interpreters as to whether the mention be really of him or of Cato the Censor. But of this critical dispute by and by. Just as in the *Iliad* Hephaistos is made to fashion with his own hand the armor which Thetis desired for her son, our Latin imitator and modifier of the Greek model lets the artist-god Vulcan direct his Cyclopean workmen to execute a shield for Aeneas at his divine mother's request; and Virgil, when describing the prophetic depictions of Roman story on the said shield, goes out of his way to commend and laud Cato,¹⁾ whom he represents not only as an inhabitant of the *Elysian* fields, but also even as a sort of *Judge* placed over the innocent: „secretosque pios; his dantem jura Catonem.“ Servius (ad h. l.). „Ut supra VI, 852. diximus, *Censorium* significat; non *Uticensem*, qui contra Caesarem bella suscepit. [Quomodo enim pils jura redderet, qui in se impius fuit?] Et supergressus est hoc loco Homeri dispositionem. Siquidem ille Minoen, Rhadamantum, Aecum de impiis judicare dicit; hic Romanum ducem innocentibus dare jura commemorat.“ And the same commentator ad VI. 842. Magne Cato. *Censorium* dicit, qui scripsit historias: multa enim bella confecit: nam Uticensem praesente Augusto, contra quem pater ejus et dimicavit, et Anticatoenes scripsit, laudare non poterat.“ Among modern writers, Holdsworth²⁾ inclined to the same view, though not without some misgivings, because — this is his reason — Augustus, our poet's patron, was not disinclined to commend the younger Cato. However, there are other reasons which, as I think, ought not only to have made him waver, but to have induced him, as, if I mistake not, more able as well as more recent interpreters have done, to let the balance incline in favor of Cato of Utica. It is not of much weight that Cato the Censor had already been introduced (VI, 842); but the whole context of our passage in its historical bearings, e. g. the mention of Catiline in the same period, seems to me decisive proof that the younger Cato is here meant. And, as to Servius' courtly and diplomatic objection „praesente Augusto“ &c., had not

¹⁾ Lib. VIII, l. 679. ²⁾ Remarks and Dissertations on Virgil, 1768, pp. 324, 325.

Horace himself fought with Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, and did not this same Horace, whilst under the patronage of the founder of the Roman monarchy, sing ¹⁾ of Cato as the hero of liberty?

„Et cuncta terrarum subacta
Praeter atrocem ²⁾ animum Catonis.“ ³⁾

Of course, I am very far from imagining that Virgil assigned to Cato this blissful abode and sacred dignity *in consequence* of his self-inflicted death; it is sufficient for our purpose that he does so *in spite* of it! And, as to Servius' exclamation of wonderment „quomodo enim“ &c., it is *his own* thought, and does not affect one way or the other the sentiments of the author he was commenting upon. Interpreters often feel called upon, nor unjustly so, to give vent to similar interrogations, when they catch their authors „napping“, forgetting or contradicting themselves. Our business, however, is merely to state facts, not to account for poetic licenses, or to apologize for poetic inconsistencies.

Another very critical passage in the Aenëid is the one relating to the death of Amata which we have, however, referred to and discussed already in §. 9 for a special, almost merely formal, purpose. We there showed, by dint of analogous passages from the writings of classical antiquity, as far as proof in such a matter is possible, that Virgil evidently applied the epithet „informe“ only to that *mode* of suicide which Amata had adopted, viz. *self-suspension*, and not to suicide as such, not to suicide in general, so that those err who have put a decisive and sweeping anti-suicidal construction upon the said epithet. And what was then said by way of attempt to explain the origin and cause of the dishonor and ignominy attached by the Romans and Greeks, in a certain measure, to self-destruction by means of a *rope*, may be here borne in mind; for Amata was, palpably, no favorite of Virgil's, either humanly or poetically: wherefore, he even forces a point to render her (superstitiously) more odious by letting her hang herself; for, as we have seen, Fabius

¹⁾ Carm. II, 1, 23. ²⁾ Of course, atrox must here be taken in a good sense. Döderlein, when comparing it with saevus and trux, explains it in this passage as = severus, the opposite of light-hearted and externally friendly (affable), and quotes as apposite use from Silius Italicus e. g. atrox Reguli fides. Vide his Lateinische Synonyme und Etymologien, Th. I, p. 40. ³⁾ Nor may it be unseasonable to remark that also sundry other Roman writers in the imperial times praised Cato, e. g. Florus, IV, 2, Seneca, de prov. 2, Martial I, 8, and Val. Maximus also.

Piccor lets her starve herself to death, and P'iso, as quoted by Heyne, merely says that she committed suicide. Had Virgil's position to her been kindred to his position to Dido, who was evidently a favorite of his — for poets, too, are occasionally partial to the personal offsprings of their inspiration —, he would have, we cannot help thinking, excused her final deed with the same amount of gentle sympathy; for her motive was, if anything, *nobler*, and her state of mind, according even to his own showing, *equally distracted*. We, consequently, aver that also the „informe“ at issue cannot be turned to any anti-suicide! *ethical* purpose.

But to return, and to conclude. Scarcely aught more remains to be said concerning the certainly somewhat gloomy destiny of suicides which Virgil has, very *mal à propos*, according to my own view and taste, embroidered into his fictitious picture of Hades. I cannot agree with Tzchirner who sees (p. 140 of the work quoted in §. 15) in it vestiges of a former anti-suicidal religious faith among the Romans; for it proves in this respect just as little as that passage in the elder Pliny which Tzchirner adduces for the same purpose, and which we shall fully discuss in §. 34. Nor can I agree with Stäudlin who (p. 63 of the work quoted in the Preface) asserts that Virgil „spricht zwar allerdings hier einer Volksmeinung gemäß“; for, on the one hand, I know of no other analogous passage in Roman literature which could bear out this view of the existence of any such popular opinion, nor does Stäudlin profess to have discovered any; and, on the other hand, Virgil's countryman and almost cotemporary fellowbard, Tatius, most certainly seems to represent an altogether opposite Roman creed of his day on this subject, when speaking of the suicidal prophet Maeon.¹⁾ At all events, however, we venture upon these two remarks. Firstly, Virgil's lines under *specific* consideration are certainly very beautiful, but their very beauty, since it was in part mere imitation from Homer, might, perhaps, be said to evidence the want of individual subjective sincerity or objective religious earnestness, and, as we have already shown in §. 3, exercised no practical efficacy in his own day among the Romans. And, secondly, worthy of all attention has the *general* remark of Gerlach's appeared to me, with which (I shall alter it only slightly) he concludes a

¹⁾ Vide e. g. in the Theb. lib. III, 108, 109 the:
„Nunc quoque Tartareo multum divisus Averno
Elysias, i, carpe plagas:“ — —

critique on merely local matters connected with Virgil's description of the shadow-realm:¹⁾ „out of this strange mixture of homeric conceptions, local legends, platonic dogmas and other philosophemes no clear image of the object could shape itself in the soul of the poet who, therefore, was unable to afford unto others an individual and a definite conception thereof.“

III. Dante.

Heyne, in his notes on Virgil, incidentally says, in regard to suicides: „Gravius illi puniuntur in Dantis Inferno. v. Canto XIII.“ This hint we will now follow out to the best of our means and ability.

All earnest students of genuine poetry are aware that, when an exile from his native city and a persecuted fugitive, this sternly thoughtful and religiously wrathful Florentine sought occupation, solace, and vengeance by, as it were, fleeing away, on speculation's and imagination's winged steed, out of the bonds of the body and beyond the confines of the earth even into that mysterious triple-realm which the „mythologico-theologic system“ of his creed and age had created unto itself: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Nor can the reader, whether superficial or painstaking, of „the Divine Comedy“ fail to know that the utterances therein are often strikingly obscure by force of their extreme figurativeness or eruditiveness, and the revelations therein often startlingly peculiar by force of that scholastic lore and temperamental glow which inspired and indited it. „Dark as the darkest oracle“ and „hidden in the light of thought“ are phrases which might be applied to the great didactic epos before us with a singular measure of propriety; and, therefore, we must be prepared for difficulty upon difficulty even in the few lines which will engage our especial attention.

Our banished wanderer-poet proved his predilection for the Mantuan minstrel, whose works had, no doubt, been to him at school and college instructor, guide, quickener in matters of taste, form, language, by selecting him for his fictitious companion on his venturesome path and for the eloquent interpreter of his wondrous visions, as long as the punishments of Hell and the sufferings of Purgatory constitute the inhold of his song, i. e. until the portals of Paradise were opened to let him gaze on the rewards of the Blessed;

¹⁾ *Österreichische Studien*, 1841, p. 270.

and then Virgil as a Heathen was obliged to give up his office to the poet's departed and sainted love, Beatrice. And, howsoever different in theme, spirit, faith the Divine Comedy is from the Aeneis, I am inclined to believe that not only the Virgilian „proxima deinde“ &c. partly induced Dante to exhibit likewise the fate of suicides in his extraordinary phantasmagoria, but that also the influence of yon other Virgilian passage „his dantem“ &c. may be traced in the Divine Comedy. Dante, however, had learnt Ethics from Aristotle whom he calls „il maestro di color che sanno“ (cf. e. g. Inferno XI, 79 ff.), and Theology from Thomas of Aquino, and, therefore, (vide the later §§ on these two moralists), suicides were sure to meet with a severer judgment at his hands than Virgil had inclined or dared to pronounce upon them.

He, namely, places them in Hell, in that Hell on the limning of which his life-full phantasy seems to have expended its richest colors and its most strained energies, be it because he found the most and the fittest images and types for it in the phenomena and facts of the earth in his own land and time, or, be it because his own dreary creed and intense passions could best verify themselves there, or, be it because human imagination in general, as if by some inherent law and principle, sooner grows weary and weak over the contemplation, conception and embodiment of what is pleasing and blissful than of terror-inspiring visions.¹⁾ — And, having placed suicides in Hell, Dante displays his genius by impassioned sensuous details of their miseries in such wise as we shall presently state. According to his notion and representation, Hell is *funnel-shaped*, the least guilty of evil-doers being located in the widest space which is nearest to the surface of the earth, whereas the worst criminals inhabit the narrowest space which is nearest to the centre of the earth, so that Lucifer as absolute Evil dwells by himself in the innermost, i. e. the last and smallest, point. Or, if we imagine Dante's Inferno to ourselves as a target, Lucifer would occupy the so-called bull's eye, the central point of black, around which the numerous ever-widening rings (*cerchi*), themselves again containing smaller circles (*gironi*), are drawn. Those suicides, now, who are brought before us as *conspicuous* sufferers our Poet places in the

¹⁾ Cf. in this last point of view e. g. Milton's Paradise Lost as compared with his Paradise Regained, and our greatest imaginative artist's, the late John Martin's, Pandaemonium as compared with his Rivers of Bliss.

second (smaller) circle of the *seventh* (larger) ring, i. e. about a dozen rings away from the *lowest* depth, and, consequently, pretty near the top: which same very position, meant, of course, as something allegorical or emblematic¹, pronounces them in a minor degree wretched than numerous other classes of sinners, for instance, those who have taken bribes, hypocrites, flatterers, seducers, sooth-sayers, robbers who, one and all, are placed lower down in the *Dantean Inferno*.

Dante, conceiving suicide generically as a *deed of violence*, places in the *identical* ring with suicides not only murderers, i. e. persons who have committed violence against *others*, but also gamblers, spendthrifts, i. e. persons who have committed violence against their *own property*.¹⁾

„Puote uomo avere in sè man violenta,
E ne' suoi beni; e però nel secondo
Giron convien che senza pro si penta
Qualunque priva sè del vostro mondo,
Biscazza, e fonde la sua facultade;
E piange là dove esser dee giocondo.“

That suicides should find a place beside murderers: this is in perfect keeping with much of what we have adduced and elucidated already in our first introductory chapter; but the immediate juxtaposition of spendthrifts²⁾ certainly does at first sight appear strange. Two more or less probable or possible solutions of this ethical difficulty, however, would seem to suggest themselves pretty readily, viz. firstly, most certainly excessive extravagance, more especially in the form of dissipation and gambling, has at all times proved a most fruitful source of subsequent blood-shed, both by murder and by suicide; and, secondly, perhaps, Dante was here really restricting his catalogue of squanderers to such as, fearing poverty and disgrace, or otherwise rendered despondent and desperate, had subsequently become suicides, or, at least, in utter weariness and wantonness had carelessly and rashly perilled and shortened their own lives. However, we must test this conjecture by such materials as the poem itself presents to us. In other parts of this *Canzone*, namely, *names* are mentioned to us, the names of real persons out of cotemporary story,

¹⁾ *Canzone XI*, 40—45. ²⁾ Think, however, of e. g. the *emphasis* of the verb *biscazzare*, i. e. giocare alla bisca e perdervi il suo, as one of the Italian commentators explains it (e fonde, sc. altrimenti, in altre dissolutezze); and cf. Dante's description of the *fourth* (larger) ring.

viz. Peter delle Vigne, Sanesano Lano, and a certain Jacob. About the end of the first of these there can be no doubt, since, as his life, so his death has found a place in general history. We learn, for instance, from Raumer's classical work ¹⁾ that, in the middle of the 13th century, he was chancellor to the Emperor Frederick II, and that he, because his imperial master, believing him guilty of sundry crimes which had been laid to his charge, had caused him to be blinded and imprisoned, really destroyed himself. But I have failed to learn aught clear and certain from the various commentators on the *Divine Comedy* ²⁾ about either Lano or Jacob whose story can only have possessed a local and a temporary interest, and the said commentators themselves are, therefore, anything but unanimous, more especially as regards Jacob. It would appear, as far as I can gather, that Lano had only unnecessarily and wantonly though he could have fled, sought death in the battle of Toppo, because, having dissipated his fortune, he feared poverty. His case, therefore, might be ranked in the category of suicide (*vide* a strange parallel in the Spartan treatment of the death of Aristodemus, §. 34). And, as to Jacob (della Capella di Sant Andrea), I incline to prefer e. g. Kannegiesser's account (in the 4th edit. of his work), according to which he was an unbridled roué from Padua who had *only* squandered away his whole substance in an insane manner, to the account which e. g. Heigelin (p. 98) gives that he made away with himself after he had got through his property. And I incline to do so not only or chiefly, because the former commentator's annotations bear throughout evidence of multifarious and accurate study, whereas those of the latter are throughout commonplace and superficial, but mainly, if not solely, because our poem itself would seem to establish a distinction between Peter delle Vigne, an undoubted suicide, and Lano, whose suicide was less direct, and is not by Dante conceived as suicide, and Jacob who, as I take it, did not destroy himself at all either directly or indirectly, and is not meant by Dante to be considered in any light except that of an unprincipled squanderer and gambler, as which also Lano is presented to us by

¹⁾ *Geschichte der Hohenstaufen*, B. IV, pp. 223—226, cf. also *Beilage I*, pp. 545—550. ²⁾ E. g. Streckfuss, Kannegiesser, Heigelin, *Philalethes*. I may and must here express my regret that not by any means all those works I should have wished to consult are at present within my reach, e. g. Cary's and Carlyle's versions and notes.

our poet; for — and this we must mark — whereas suicides *proper*, like *delle Vigne*, receive a *vegetable character*, *Lano* and *Jacob* retain *human shape*, though without vestment, i. e. without a shade-like corporeity. However, this merely preliminarily for the present; we now pass on to a closer analysis of the matter, as base of which the passages mentioned at the bottom of the page will serve.¹⁾

Lucretia and Zeno are in the *first* circle of praiseworthy Heathens beside Sokrates, Plato, &c. Dido and Cleopatra are in the *second* circle among the voluptuaries. Brutus and Cassius are in the *very lowest* circle among those who have committed treachery against benefactors. [I may also here incidentally allude to the fearful lot and spot Dante assigns unto Judas Iscariot, but not, because he was a suicide, but because he had been a traitor: our poet, like many other moralists, justly deeming treachery the vilest, because the most cowardly, of crimes, and treachery for filthy lucre worst of all, not to speak of the character of the person by *him* betrayed.] Cato Uticensis, finally, is not in Hell at all, but in a kind of Vestibule to Purgatory. — Is, then, this from the above different, and in itself again various, location of Pagan suicides an inconsistency on the part of the Italian poet? Was he not rightly clear within himself about the nature of suicide and the measure of its guilt? Or, did he purpose intimating that the sin of suicide as such was not, and could not be, properly manifest to the *Heathen*, and that they, therefore, are judged according to *other* features in their character and *other* incidents in their conduct? — Two circumstances induce me to answer this our last question in the affirmative. Firstly, a somewhat obscure²⁾ passage in which Dante lets Virgil say of the soul of the suicide:

„Cade in la selva, e non l'è parte scelta;
Ma là, dove fortuna la balestra“: —

And, secondly, when treating of *Christians*, Dante lets all of them load upon themselves by the act of self-destruction *equal guilt*, and, consequently, makes *no difference* in the punishment inflicted upon them. However, before we proceed to describe such punishment, it may be worth while to state what strange reflections Louis

¹⁾ Inferno IV, 128, 138; V, 61—63; XXXIV, 64—67; XIII, 94—106, and mark especially 97, 98; Purgatorio, Canzone I, and Paradiso, Canzone XIV.
²⁾ Vide upon it Kannegiesser, *B.* I, p. 210.

Racine was led into by the fact that Dante assigned to Cato of Utica the *prae-purgatorial* place I have already alluded to. After having praised Milton's anti-suicidal teachings, of which we shall by and by take notice, he severely upbraids, and inveighs against, the singer of the *Divine Comedy* for the opposite, for criminal immorality on this score.¹⁾ „Et comment excuser le Dante, qui établit comme gardien du Purgatoire Caton d'Utique? Il a appris aux hommes que la liberté est un si grand bien, qu'on aime mieux perdre la vie, que de la perdre.“ It may be true that Dante's mode of handling Cato's case is a real inconsistency, more especially since he prophesies the Utican's re-clothing with his body which is to be radiant of glory (vide, however, the hint I threw out on this matter, when speaking of the *Aeneïs*); but surely, judging from the tenor of the passage I have just quoted, the younger Racine must have momentarily forgotten, since we cannot reasonably suppose him to have been entirely ignorant of, such portions of the *Inferno* as we have already alluded to and must now more explicitly dwell upon. We will commence by extracting Dante's own words.

„Quando si parte l'anima feroce
 Dal corpo, ond' ella stessa s'è disvelta,
 Minos la manda alla settima foce.
 Cade in la selva, e non l'è parte scelta;
 Ma là, dove fortuna la balestra,
 Quivi germoglia, come gran di spelta.
 Surge in vermena, ed in pianta silvestra:
 L'Arpie, pascendo poi delle sue foglie,
 Fanno dolore, ed al dolor finestra.
 Come l'altre, verrem per nostre spoglie;
 Ma non però ch'alcuna sen rivesta;
 • Chè non è giusto aver ciò, ch'uom si toglie.“

Thus, designating the suicidal soul by what (vide §. 13) we cannot but deem the more strong than true epithet „feroce“, he lets it, as I have already hinted, be doomed to receive a vegetable character — in gradual growth through the three successive stages of „germoglia“, „vermena“, „pianta silvestra“ —, vegetableity being, as we generally assume, the lowest form of life. But, though the said „anima“ has become a plant, it as such still suffers pain, and constantly sighs. Harpies, as symbol of remorse, feed on its foliage,

¹⁾ Oeuvres, T. IV, p. 297 in his elaborate criticisms on le *Paradis perdu*.

nor can it ever get its body back again as garment, whereas all other kinds of Sinners will, like the Blessed, re-assume their bodies on the Day of Judgment.

Such is a careful illustration of Dante's self-created vision and self-revealed destiny of suicides in the future world. The most attentive perusal of the whole Divine Comedy yields no further light on this mistily gloomy matter, unless the notes I made, whilst reading through the book, should have, when I proceeded to employ them, in aught misled me unwittingly and unwillingly to misunderstand and misrepresent. It is difficult to retain a perfectly sure footing on so slippery a path; it is difficult to gaze steadily into such dazzling radiance. We will not attempt to play the part of an Oedipus and try to solve this riddle which the Sphynx-like minstrel has given us about Eternity; we will still less essay and endeavor to reconcile his mystical decree against the self-slain with what must have been, to some extent at least, his orthodox creed about the resurrection of the body: We will, rather, content ourselves with making two merely practical concluding observations. I have numbered this daring and mighty song of Dante's among Epic poems, more on account of its affinity, as regards our theme, to the Aeneis than in accordance with the stereotype classifications of aesthetical science. Otherwise, it is, like e. g. the book of Job, rather a Didactic than an Epic work, because in it the individuality of the Poet everywhere betrays and reveals itself most traceably and proveably. His own experience and faith, not only the history and spirit of his age, he has evoked and shaped into it. It is Dante's own innermost voice which we hear in it; and a great practical moral purpose was, according to his own statement:

„ — — — L'ingegno affreno,
Perchè non corra *che virtù nol guidi*“ —

his guide and aim throughout. But, nevertheless, his „passing strange“ dealing with suicide was scarcely calculated to work ethically, the correctness of which assertion the example of Ugo Foscolo, who edited the Divine Comedy, and commented upon it,¹⁾ might go some way to demonstrate. We shall see in §. 21 that Foscolo, when he penned his Jacopo Ortis, was himself a defender of suicide, and lets

¹⁾ Vide e. g. in his Essays on Petrarch, 1823, a „parallel between Dante and Petrarch“, p. 163 aqq.

his hero die suicidally; yet this same Jacopo Ortis possesses an enthusiastic admiration of, and a familiar acquaintance with, the Divine Comedy, nay, visits the grave of our Bard at Ravenna, when he is about to stab himself, and then and there exclaims with reference to his final rash deed: „over thy urn, father Dante! whilst embracing it, *I was still more strongly confirmed in my intention.*“

IV. Spenser.

We now turn from the darkest and sternest of modern poems to one of the gentlest and most childlike Epics, our own Spenser's song which, though the production of the statesman of a Protestant Queen and conceived and elaborated in nebulous and unruly Ireland, looks and reads like an offspring rather of the age of chivalry and of the sunny south. The scene¹⁾ I am about to crave one brief moment's attention for — the reader shall be left to turn to it for himself, nor will he regret the trouble — is one of the most judicious and picturesque psychologico-allegorical episodes in the whole Romaunt. Despair, arising from the two most frequent, important, and interesting causes, viz. Love and Religion, furnishes the Knight with weapons of self-destruction, and prompts him to the deadly deed. Argument and counter-argument ensue. But Despair triumphs over the stereotype reasonings employed by the Knight. However, when he is about to turn the murderous weapon against himself, Una wrenches it out of his hand, and withdraws him from the dangerous company, into which he had fallen. Thereupon, Despair, disappointed and foiled, would fain herself give death unto herself; but she is incapacitated from doing so.

Not infrequent are the imitations of this scene in later and latest English poetry, e. g. in Bunyan's prose-epos „the Pilgrim's Progress“ (to which especial reference will be made for a theological purpose in Sect. IV), and in Southey's very confused and very tedious, though earnestly and nobly meant, juvenile epic,²⁾ where we find Despair opposing its hoarse and hideous note to those Heavenly voices which were wont to salute the lowly maiden's ear, and reasoning most diffusely, but rather rhetorically than acutely, in defence of self-de-

¹⁾ Faery Queen, Book I, canto X, stanzas 28—53. ²⁾ Joan of Arc, Book I in the „Vision of the Maid of Orleans.“ By the by, I know not, whether it be true that, as Oslander (p. 148 of the book quoted in §. 13) states, this ill-starred heroine was really accused of suicide, because she threw herself out of the window of her prison.

struction, demonstrating that all objections to the commission of suicide are the mere offsprings of „timid piety“, &c., whereas the Maiden wards off its attacks upon herself by averring suicide to be a birth of „impious pride“, &c., and the spell of the foul temptation is broken, like an impotent billow against an adamant rock, by such strength and resolution as the consciousness of the soul's immortality imparts to her to suffer and to live on, in spite of all the misery she feels, and of all the misery prophesied to her. — Yet, honor to the man who, still very young, set himself the task of selecting at all for the theme of his as yet untried Muse that being most truly and most purely heroic in every manly and holy sense of this term, whom the English Protestant Shakspeare, from more or less pardonable and explicable prejudice and ignorance had vilified, and whom the French Catholic Voltaire, from wholly unpardonable and almost inexplicable want of patriotic pride, moral feeling, and historical veracity, had deridingly „dragged down“ into the mud and mire of — la Pucelle!

V. Milton.

But, weightier and grander, nay, of almost overpowering sublimity, is the manner in which our blind bard introduces our topic.¹⁾ Here again, however, bare allusion may suffice; for what educated Englishman has not the Poem itself on his shelf, if he care to refer to it? Delille²⁾ observes acutely. „La resolution de mourir, pour finir notre misère, ne montre pas tant de fermeté, que le dessein de la supporter, et de se soumettre aux décrets de la providence; c'est pourquoi notre auteur attribue avec grande délicatesse cette pensée à Eve, et il la fait désapprouver à Adam“; or, as the same French critic also expresses himself, ent'rely, as I take it, according to the spirit and meaning of the English poet: woman in her „weakness“ proposes what man in his „wisdom“ rejects. Louis Racine (in the previously quoted work) remarks less pertinently, as I think. „Milton est très-estimable d'avoir fait condamner l'homicide de soi-même par le père du genre humain, et de lui faire dire que le desir de se tuer est une faiblesse indigne de l'excellence de l'homme. *Leçon utile que donne Milton à sa nation.*“ I know not, whether Milton purposed to be so purely didactic on our theme; but, on the one hand,

¹⁾ Paradise Lost, Book X, towards the end. ²⁾ Vide his remarks on this passage in his translation of our poem, 1805.

the whole incident has something so extremely unnatural, yet so deeply poetical, about it that I should almost incline to believe that the aesthetical effect in its purely human pathos here preponderated in the author's intent over the ethical instruction. And, on the other hand, as regards the specifically *patriotic* design, in Milton's days (vide §. 13) suicide would not appear to have been by any means a characteristic propensity and practice of his nation. — Subsequently, Milton lets Eve propose to slay herself *alone*, and *from the noblest possible of motives*: to which proposition, however, her spouse also energetically refuses his consent *upon religious grounds*. But we shall do well to break off here, — for the subject is delicate unto the touch of heterodoxy, — and to commit our poet's whole treatment of self-slaughter in this last great Epos of modern European literature to the student's own reflections: else we might, for instance, ask: how, if the first human couple, instead of (as the Anglican Articles assume) unintentionally *felling* all future mankind by their Fall, had (as the Puritan thinker imagines possible) remorsefully *slain* all future mankind in themselves *after* their Fall?!

Germany echoed the voice of Milton, though, to be sure, as in theme, so in weakness, rather that of his *Paradise Regained* than that of his *Paradise Lost*, in Klopstock's „*Messias*“, which every German and every Englishman knows by name, but which few persons, whether German or English, have now-a-days the patience to read through; and, for my own part, I really cannot help thinking that the keen-sighted, though unsentimental, Lichtenberg did not evince an altogether wrong taste, when he confessed¹⁾ that the one verse of the psalmist's „before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God“, was infinitely more to his religious feelings than the whole of Klopstock's *Messias*. Taylor, now, asserts²⁾ that in the said religious epos the penitence and *suicide* of the Traitor are narrated „tragically and sublimely.“ Aye, *might* have been, but are *not*, i. e. the Poet had the best possible opportunity for discussing our very theme as a natural and even a necessary element in his song, if he had chosen to make use of it; but he did not choose. For, Klopstock, though in one sense

¹⁾ Vide his autobiographical sketch. The above passage stands in Ps. 90, v. 2. ²⁾ Survey of German Literature, vol. I, p. 275.

and way so manly, was in another sense and way so effeminate that he preferred dealing in the most sentimental fictions and shapeless visions to portraying the palpably striking veritable characters and situations in the life and death of Jesus. Thence, his narrative of the deed and the *death* of Judas, in themselves so susceptible of dramatic treatment and so suggestive of ethical reflections, is finished off in about eight lines, and Taylor's assertion seems little better than a mere whim of his own; nor, indeed, is suicide as such so much as alluded to in all the twenty long-winded Cantos. — —

In all the above-mentioned modern Epics from Spenser down to Southey the hero's or heroine's moral strength or religious faith successfully battles against, and finally overcomes, the inward or outward solicitation to self-destruction; and, as we may say, the Poet himself, reasoning and resolving for him or her, and applauding the triumphant issue, in so far fixes his „canon against self-slaughter“; albeit, as I think, the above-mentioned scenes were not so much designed to be of a *doctrinal* or *hortatory* nature as, rather, to give rise and shape unto interesting episodes, trial-scenes, which should furnish the poet's imagination with a welcome opportunity for indulging in what will ever remain pathetic, though ever so often represented; for, verily, before the most starry souls, bright through love and pure in will, the darkest and heaviest clouds tempestuously, though transiently, drive.

VI. Cooper.

A remark which will apply equally to all the §§ in this Chapter, and which I, therefore, need not repeat, is this: I shall introduce only such belletristical works as I consider to be worthy of mention and comment because of their literary excellence or the renown of their authors, and even among these only such as I happen to possess that familiar acquaintance with which may warrant me in speaking with some degree of confidence about them. An incidental allusion to our topic in some epos of a comparatively unknown poet would not appear to me to repay in any wise the trouble of directing the reader's attention to it; but, though even the name of Thomas Cooper, „the Chartist“, may be unknown to some of those into whose hands this Treatise of mine may chance to come, the very title¹⁾ of his „prison-rhyme“ would seem to compel me not to pass

¹⁾ The Purgatory of Suicides. In ten books, 1845. Edit. 3, 1853.

by in silence a performance of this living poet's, lest anybody should imagine that what a self-educated man of the people, until his 23rd year a shoe-maker, then a school-master, then an under-worker on a newspaper, and, finally, an inmate of Stafford gaol on account of certain seditious speeches and riotous acts of his during the Chartist misdoings in the Potteries, thought out and wrote down in his cell, seemed unfit for companionship with high-born or world-famed minstrels who, doubtless, knew more about history and philosophy, and wrote, perchance, better grammar and better metre. Far be from me aught like an underrating of the efforts and successes of the poverty-stricken, humbly-born, circumstance-vanquishing autodidacts among ourselves, whether Chartists or not Chartists, in these modern days of ours! For, verily, as it seems to me, in the brains and souls of numberless individuals in our British so-called lower orders there breathe, and battle, and burn energies, insights, principles, aspirations, visions which, when uttered and revealed, be it in prose, or, be it in poetry, fairly put to shame and flight the pompous babblings of church-dignitaries, and the measured systems of professional reasoners, and the smooth verses of scholarlike bards. And Thomas Cooper, the Chartist's, „prison-rhyme“, dedicated to Thomas Carlyle who penned the pamphlet on „Chartism“, is, verily! no unfit illustration and demonstration of this same fact, though it may not have met with, and may not be entitled to, *all* the favor and praise the poet himself, as poets and more especially self-taught ones, are wont to do, prophesied to this offspring of his two years' captivity, he being then already forty years of age, consequently, somewhat beyond that time of life when most „born poets“ send forth their firstlings. The idea, however (as he himself informs us in the Preface), had been conceived ten years previously; leisure and mood for the execution — a jail afforded.

And this idea? The spirits of any given number of suicides, from Sardanapalus to Romilly, discuss themselves, each other, their times, and things in general, some of them very eloquently, nobly, and even eruditely, and Cooper, listening in a dream or vision, on ten successive occasions (whence also the ten cantos), tells us of what he saw and heard, prefacing, however, each of the ten books by apostrophes of a lyrico-didactic cast to various themes, from the Robin to the Queen, from Woman to Liberty; and, if I mistake not, these preludes, in which his own and whole individual nature more

particularly vents itself, constitute, as the most thoroughly human and natural, so the most impressive and beautiful, portions of his Epos, if Epos we may, or, must, call what by its contents reminds us of Dante, and by its form of Spenser.

A strictly aesthetical estimate of this, or any other, poem does not lie within the scope of our Treatise, even if I could place greater confidence in my own taste and judgment concerning matters of artistic criticism than I have any right to do. In Gilfillan's „literary portraits“, however, if my memory do not deceive me, I have read a brief critique of Cooper's work which, as far as I can recollect, is rather in praise, somewhat high-flownly put, according to yon late Scotch clergyman's fondly indulged mannerism, than in dispraise, of it as a work of art. But, confining ourselves solely to our especial topic, I cannot but deem both the title and the plan of the entire poem somewhat infelicitous, inasmuch as the poet himself would not appear to have been clear about the doom of suicides or the sin of suicide, since he places the doers, one and all, Pagan and Christian, apparently alike in the same so-called Purgatory (where, however, they live and talk pretty much as they did on earth, awaiting each alike an ultimate redemption (?) and hopefully expecting a final millennium, i. e. a socialistic utopia on earth), and since he more than once gives us to understand that his own position to the belief in the immortality of the human soul even is a very weak and wavering thing. Under such circumstances, then, the results of manifold general reading may be conveniently displayed, much manly thought, sterling feeling, and imaginative freshness may reveal themselves; but aught resembling a fixed principle and a clear tenet touching our theme must not be sought for, and cannot be found.

Since, however, it seems to me highly probable that but few persons in the more educated classes have assigned a place to this prison-rhyme on their book-shelves, I will transcribe a few stanzas by way of enabling the reader to judge for himself of the external characteristics of versification, and to see more distinctly in what manner the incarcerated Chartist arrives at, and enters upon, his peculiar theme.¹⁾

„Is life worth having? Or, is he most wise
Who, with death-potion its fierce fever slakes,

¹⁾ Book I, stanzas XIV, XV, XVI, and the first line of stanza XVII.

And ends, self-dragg'd, his mortal miseries?
 Can he be guilty who, at once, forsakes
 The agony which, sure as death, o'ertakes,
 Early or late, all who with wrong contend?
 Since Power this earth a clime of misery makes
 For him who will not to its godhead bend —
 Why to th' enfranchised grave with sluggish footsteps wend?

Thus feebly pondering, with troubled brain,
 The right of suffering man to consummate,
 Unsummoned, his high trust, my heart grew fain
 To slay the incubus that on it sate,
 Breeding disgust of life and jaundiced hate.
 Forthwith, I strove the mind's turmoil to quell
 By imaging that joy all-elevate
 Which through earth's universal heart shall swell
 When over land and sea hath rung Oppression's knell.

But sadness checked the strain. Enfever'd Sleep,
 With tardy foot, came last; and, while she bound
 My limbs in outward death, within the deep
 Recesses of the brain into life wound
 These aching thoughts; yea, into shapes that frowned
 Or smiled, by turns, with seeming passion rife.
 And descant joined on human themes, though sound
 Of human voice none uttered: 'twas the strife
 Of Mind, not audible by mode of mortal life. —
 Methought I voyaged in the bark of Death, —

§. 18. The Drama.

Though dramatic literature, as the union and culminating point, as it were, of epic and lyrical poetry is of younger date than the latter, yet we will speak of it before we say a few words on lyrical and didactic poetry, because it is of greater interest, and has exercised greater influence, as regards our theme than any other species of poetic composition, the Novel, perhaps, excepted.

The frequency of the introduction of suicide, as an element of the Heroic, Pathetic, or merely Narrative, into the extant dramatic productions of the Greek tragic writers cannot fail to obtrude itself at once upon everybody's notice: in Sophokles and Euripides at least; for, as far as I can at this moment recollect, there is no direct treatment of our topic in the entirely or partially extant trilogical tragedies of Aeschylus, whereas we possess scarcely a single drama

of Sophokles' or Euripides' which is free from suicide *accomplished*, *threatened*, or *meditated*; nay, even the former poet's Philoktetes which might almost be quoted in exemplification and demonstration of anti-suicidal characteristics and tendencies, contains, if we peruse it closely, in three distinct and separate passages such hints as a defender of suicide would readily welcome. Let us remember such *dramatis personae* as e. g. Ajas, Dejarira, Elektra, Evadne, Eurydice, Haimon, Helene, Herakles, Hermione, Hippolytos, Jokaste, Medea, Oedipus, Orestes, Phaedra.

It would be impossible, I presume, at this time of day to fix with any satisfactory degree of certainty in how far each of the said triumvirate of tragic writers was in this matter guided by the religious myths or heroic fables of his country and people, or, in how far, on the contrary, myth and fable were by him created or, rather, metamorphosed and modified to serve poetic and artistic purposes; for from Aeschylus to Euripides the mythos or mythoi enact a vital part, though they are, manifestly, not treated quite alike by each of the poets under mention. In all three there is, we may say, an ethical idealization of the mythos, but issuing, perhaps, in Aeschylus more into naïve theology, in Sophokles more into religious ethics, and in Euripides more into pathological rhetoric.

When Greek *Moral Philosophy* steps before us in its earliest known distinct and developed form, viz. Pythagorism, it, as we shall see in §. 23, expressly interdicts suicide; and such express interdiction would seem to presuppose, if not exactly the existence of opposite doctrines, yet, at all events, the importance of the question, and the utility of the discussion. For, what thoughtful men occupy themselves with enquiring and examining into, is, generally speaking, a subject which is likely to interest and influence their cotemporaries and countrymen, and one concerning which errors or doubts already prevail to a greater or minor extent. What, however, existed, prior to Pythagorism, in the shape of *religious* doctrine and tradition, among the Greeks was chiefly and upon the whole that which we are in the habit of calling *Classical Mythology*. And its nexus with, and bearing upon, our immediate theme? This question seems almost superfluous, because the answer is so self-evident. If that strange and motley amalgamation of religion, poetry and philosophy pictured and hymned forth virtualiter and literaliter Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines for almost everything that we now-

a-days call folly, passion, vice, crime: how should suicide also have escaped being exemplified and even glorified, though not exactly in the Divinities, yet at all events in the Semi-Divinities thereof? Nor must we for one moment imagine that, if we are not treated in Classical Mythology to any suicidal veritable Divinity, we should be warranted in surmising that God and Goddess would, haply, have shrunk from suicide on principle, have considered it an action beneath their dignity, have regarded it as something contrary to their elevated mission. Far otherwise: they *did* not commit suicide simply and solely because they, in consequence of their immortal nature, *could* not! At least, the elder Pliny ¹⁾ hands to us this key as the one with which we are to unlock this phenomenon, and, in his capacity of philosopher and moralist, even goes so far as to take upon himself to lament the existence of so great a drawback upon their otherwise enviable privileges. „Inperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia (solatio?), ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis.“ It is a most naïvely bold piece of sympathy, to be sure, on the part of this pro-suicidal ancient naturalist; but, is it not quite in the spirit of, in perfect keeping with, much and most of what incontestably characterized the male and female beings who throned and ruled, pranked and revelled in the the Olymp, the Hades, or the Ocean?

Far be it from me to suppose that the Religion of the ancient Greeks was primitively, had always been, something of this kind. On the contrary, there must have been an age, when no myths about Olympic levities, intrigues, altercations etc. existed, and the Divinities were believed to have something more genuinely divine in and around themselves, which age, however, is like unto a primeval grove, dense and dark, into the secret and sacred recesses of which our modern vision, my own at least, cannot penetrate. We may try allegorical interpretations or mystical symbolizations as much as we like — Plato already intimated them as a possible thing and the Alexandrine school developed them as the actual thing — unto us Greek Mythology

¹⁾ H. N., lib. II, c. VII, sect. 5. On the textual word solatia Sillig in his edit. of 1851 makes the following acute critical remark. „In hac voce corruptela videtur latere; unde enim pluralis numerus, si de una modo re quae solatium affert est sermo? Scripsisse Plinium puto solatio, i. e. consolatium, ἀναξίσητον.“

must, I humbly ween, remain that gay, immoral, motley phenomenon or rather series of phenomena which Hesiodos drily besang, and Homeros plastically enshrined, which the Churchfathers vehemently denounced, and which our Christian youths at our particularly religious and churchy Schools and Colleges, with the gracious aid of Lempriere, are expected and commanded to be specially at home in. Nor was it aught else, I presume, to the multitude in Hellas in the times, when the great Greek dramatists arose and wrote. And we will not marvel thereat over-much, enlightened and acute though that multitude must be deemed in very many respects; for we know what the erudite and contemplative Hindoos of our times believe of their Trimurti and their Avatars, and may recollect what in the middle ages most of the Christian clergy taught and quarrelled about, and most of the Christian laity accepted and trusted in, and dare not forget that even Mormonism and Table Turning are the religion and creed of many among us in this same 19th century of ours. —

Well, then, there were no self-slaughteous Gods or Goddesses in the ancient Hellenic Pantheon, because a physico-metaphysical necessity, not because free ethical motive, did not allow this matter to be otherwise. On the other hand, however, as mythographers and poets assure us, if mortals or semi-mortals committed suicide, this act of theirs did not in the slightest degree interfere with their becoming subsequently transplanted, in the stars or the fountains, on the hills or the plains, into fit objects for grateful worship, tender remembrance, or admiring imitation, i. e. as personalities which had through death passed ever into the rank and office of Heroes or Heroines. — And, inasmuch as this really was the case, as we have in sundry portions of this Treatise said and shown, it would seem to me the most natural thing in the world that the Greek tragic poets in their purely mythic or semi-mythic dramas should have bona fide represented suicide as a befitting action, and have taken for granted that the mass of their audiences would view it in the same light. (Vide what has been already adduced, for a somewhat different purpose, in §. 13.)

Nevertheless, an entirely opposite view has been broached by sundry christian writers in regard to Euripides, solely, however, on the strength of a passage which we will presently cite and briefly comment on. In the 16th century, Muretus, whilst discussing suicide, after having quoted the testimony of Aristoteles (vide §. 26) to the

effect that suicide is an act of cowardice and a proof of inability to endure pain, informs us ¹⁾ in the very superscription „quod Aristoteles sensit de iis qui seipsos interficerent, Euripidis testimonio confirmatum“, and in the text itself proceeds thus. „Sed et Euripides id ante docuerat. Euripidis autem versus hi sunt:

ἰσχυράμην δὲ, καίπερ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὢν,
 ῥῆ δαίταν ὄφλω τίν', ἐκλιπὼν φῶς.
 τὰς συμφορὰς γὰρ ὅστις οὐκ ἐκίσταται
 θνητὸς παρκαῶς, ὃν τρέπον χραῖων, φέρει,
 οὐδ' ἀνδρὸς ἂν δύναϊδ' ὑποσθῆναι βέλος.
 ἐγκατετήσσω θάνατον.

This is an exclamation of Herakles' himself (Hercul. fur. 1236 —1243: I quoted from Bothe's edit.) in a drama, the fable or argument of which, as also the context in which the said exclamation occurs, have been given in §. 13. Can, then, this isolated passage prove what Muretus quoted it in proof of? Anything but this, if I mistake not. It is self-evident — for the various readings which exist of some parts of this passage do not alter the general sentiment — that the above few lines by themselves and contextually do not admit of any interpretation except the one which Muretus supposed; and I will add that the very same sentiment is expressed in the identical drama by other persons with equal vigor and clearness, as e. g. in Amphitryon's „but he is the best who constantly preserves hope in his breast; only the evil man desponds“, or, in Theseus' „the wise mortal unresistingly endures divine destiny.“ But, if we inspect the collective extant dramas of Euripides' and the preserved Fragments of lost ones into the bargain, equally decided and far more numerous are in some of them, in most of them, lines which produce the directly opposite instruction, no matter, whether they be placed on the lips of heroes or heroines, or uttered in the semi-lyric, semi-didactic obscure form of Chorus-lays, as, for instance, when Elektra (lines 675 sqq., 745 sqq.) menaces to thrust a sword into her breast, if Orestes should fall, and is even on the point of doing so, the Chorus is enlisted to prevent her by *solely* representing to her that, perhaps, Orestes had not fallen, so that she would act *prematurely*. I have, however, accumulated evidence of this kind enough

¹⁾ Variarum lectionum libri XV, lib. IV, c. 2. The same writer, in his Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics again refers us from the Stagirite to the Poet, Opera omnia, edid. Ruhaken, T. III, p. 282.

already in §§. 9 and 13; why, then, should I attempt to add to it here, though it would be very easy to do so? Whether, therefore, the collectiveness of the person-utterances or the general tenor of the chorus-songs be the exponent of our poet's own real opinions and feelings, we cannot but arrive at the result that his own principles and predilections were — like those of Sophokles (vide §. 13) — preponderatingly pro-suicidal, not the contrary.

Plutarch already¹⁾ warned the youth of his days, and more particularly with regard to Euripides, against identifying or confounding the opinions of the Greek tragic writers with what they let the various personages who figure in their scenic productions put forth; and I am very far from intending to affirm that Euripides *himself* in propria persona subscribed to this or that dictum of a dramatis persona, or embodied his own convictions in this or that Chorus-song. But, since we have no means whatsoever of gathering from other sources what his veritable views on our topic were, I must be allowed to take the liberty of affirming that his dramas, and likewise those of Sophokles, present themselves before us as a species of running mythico-ethical commentary in illustration and vindication of the later Stoic maxim „*praestat emori, quam per dedecus vivere*“, of whatsoever kind *that* may have been which appeared „*dedecus*“ either to the individual himself, or to the nation of which he was a member; in other words, they are manifestly favorable to suicide as a deed evidencing, and emanating from, laudable courage and a due sense of honor, whensoever circumstances of affliction or ignominy seemed to render, whether on the grounds of heroism or on those of dignity and self-respect, the continuance in life insupportable or undesirable.

It is true, in the days of Euripides those philosophical schools which raised pro-suicidalism into a favorite principle, the tenets of Zenon and Chrysippos, of Epikuros and Aristippos, had not as yet either become prevalent or been started; nevertheless, I cannot exactly comprehend, still less can I assent to, what in recent years the erudite Prof. Hermann, still confidently harping on the chord which Muretus had struck, puts forth²⁾ as his own impression that „gerabe

¹⁾ Vide his elaborate treatise de audiendis poetis. ²⁾ Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen, 1843, B. II, p. 1396 in a very interesting review of Baumhauer's diss. περί της εὐλόγου ἐξαγωγῆς. Veterum philosophorum, praecipue Stoicorum, doctrina de morte voluntaria, Utrecht, 1842, which same diss. itself I have not been able to procure; but, judging from the review, it is not of much value.

bei diesem Dichter", viz. Euripides, the above dictum of Herakles „auch als philosophische Seitenansicht gelten könne." More about this, of course, in the next Dissertation (Section I): and we now pass on to the Romans.

The Romans, as is well known, inclined in general but little, and not until a comparatively late period of the Republic, say the 3rd cent. a. C., to dramatic literature, and even then it was not a growth of their own mind and taste, but only a borrowed and an adopted offspring of Greece. Their ruder, less artistic nature and life induced them to prefer gladiatorial feats and fights of beasts, mimes and pantomimes to such more sublime, plastic, genial productions of the tragic muse, as had, about three centuries previously, sprung forth in such wondrous perfection out of the mighty brain and devout soul of Aeschylus. A proper mythology of their own they had not, and the great actions and persons of their antique ages, whether fabulous or historic, they were content to make over to the tender care of Clio; and it was reserved for modern dramatic poetry to compensate for this defect by having frequent recourse to the annals and myths of ancient Rome in search of themes for Melpomene's inspirations. Among the ancient Romans themselves, even after they had begun to exercise and cultivate the art of tragic minstrelsy, nothing would seem to have been attempted beyond the translation or imitation of Greek dramas, and what little has reached us of the *tragic* literature of the Romans in the imperial times consists most certainly, and (almost) without a single exception, of Greek subjects treated without any mentionable degree of originality. At least, those ten pieces which are generally ascribed to Seneca, usually to the younger one (and with much good reason, if I mistake not, judging both from their spirit and their style, excepting, however, the „Octavia“, in which Nero's teacher himself is made to enact a part), have appeared to me, as far as I am a judge in such matters, somewhat devoid of both native enthusiasm and plastic refinement, and turn one and all on exactly the most dark and revolting Hellenic themes — Mars' Roma loved action and bloody action too —, e. g. the myths of Oedipus, Thyestes, etc.

If, now, Euripides, though he is said to have been aided by the suicide-condemning Sokrates in the composition of his dramas, did not therefore impart to them an anti-suicidal drift (what Aeschylus, who is said to have been a Pythagorean, and Pythagoras, as

we shall by and by learn, interdicted self-slaughter, would have done in this respect, I am unable to say), it is pretty natural to take for granted that the *Stoic Seneca* (vide what we shall have to communicate about him in the next Section) would have considerable delight in supplying his heroes and heroines with pro-suicidal propensities and declamations. And, indeed, whoso will have the patience to wade through the said few genuine or spurious Senecaic dramas will at once be forcibly struck by the extreme frequency and vigor with which the one or the other *dramatis persona* indulges in these matters. Inasmuch, however, as perhaps but few of my readers have really had the patience to perform the said not exactly edifying task, I will take upon myself to extract from the dramas under mention the chief passages which bear in this direction on the topic of our enquiry.

Hercules Furens. ¹⁾

Megara.

Cogi qui potest, nescit mori.

Lycus. Effare, thalamis quod novis potius parem
Regale manus?

Megara. Aut tuam mortem, aut meam.

Lycus. Moriére demens?

Megara. Conjugi occurram meo. —

Hercules. Cur animam in istâ luce detineam amplius
Morerque, nihil est: cuncta jam amisi bona,
Mentem, arma, famam, conjugem, gnatos, manus;
Etiam furem: *nemo polluto queat*
Animo mederi: morte sanandum scelus.

Medea. ²⁾

Jason. Ingrata vita est, cujus acceptae pudet.

Medea. *Retinenda non est, cujus acceptae pudet.*

Troades. ³⁾

Chorus Troadum. Post mortem nihil est, *ipsaque mors nihil,*

Andromacha. Jam erepta Danaïs conjugem *sequeretur* meum,
Nisi hic teneret: hic meos animos domat,
Morique prohibet;

Phoenixsae. ⁴⁾

Oedipus.

Qui cogit mori

Nolentem, in aequo est, quique properantem impedit.

Occidere est vetare cupientem mori.

Nec tamen in aequo est: alterum gravior reor:

¹⁾ Act. II, 428—431. Act. V, 1260—1264, and vide also the following lines. ²⁾ Act. III, 505, 506. ³⁾ Act. II, 401. Cf. however the entire chorus-song. Act. III, 422—424. ⁴⁾ Act. I, 98—105, and 146—153.

Malo imperari, quam eripi mortem mihi.
Desiste coepto, virgo: *jus vitae ac necis*
Meae penes me est. Regna deserui libens;
Regnum mei retineo. —

Morte prohiberi haud queo.

Ferrum negabis? noxias lapso vias
Cludes, et arctis colla laqueis inseri
Prohibebis? herbas, quae ferunt letam, auferes?
Quid ista tandem cura proficiet tua?
Ubique mors est. Optime hoc cavit deus.
Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest;
At nemo mortem: mille ad hanc aditus patent.

Hercules Oetaeus.¹⁾

Dejanira. Contempsit omnes ille, qui mortem prius. —
Ad fata et umbras atque pejorem polum
Praecedere illum dicis, *an possum prior*
Mortem occupare? Fare, si nondum occidit! —
Sic, sic agendum est! — Tam levis poenas manus
Tantas reposcit? —
Cur deinde ferrum? Quidquid ad mortem trahit,
Telum est abunde: rupe ab aetheriâ ferar. —
Mors innocentes sola deceptos facit. —
Frustra tenetur ille, qui statuit mori.
Proinde lucem fugere decretum est mihi. —
Quicumque misero forte dissuadet mori,
Crudelis ille est. Interim poena est mori,
Sed saepe donum: pluribus venia obfuit.

But the reader will, I dare say, have grown tired of such Stoic philosophy in rhythmical shape;²⁾ remark, however, I may that occasionally in the one or the other of the dramas an opposing voice on our subject is also to be heard, e. g. the somewhat odd logic in lines 1028—1031 of the Hercules Oetaeus, where Hyllas says in reference to his mother Dejanira who is bent on dying, more especially on his slaying her.

„O misera pietas! si mori matrem vetas:
Patri es scelestus; si mori pateris: tamen
In matre peccas. Surgit hinc illinc nefas.
Inhibenda tamen est, verum et eripiam scelus.“

¹⁾ Act. II, 444; Act. III, 773—775, 847, 848, 860, 861, 891, 923, 924, 930—932. ²⁾ By the by, also the „Cum possim mori“ of Thyestes (Thyestes, III, 442) might possibly also be pro-suicidally construed.

If we except an odd work or two of doubtful origin, ancient Judaism may be said never to have known, and early Christianity not to have adopted, tragedy in the sense and form of classic Paganism. Nor can the Middle Ages, I believe, boast of any kindred productions; at least, all those allegorical or pantomimic dramatic performances known under the names of *Mysteries* (not, however, I presume, from *μυστηριον*, as if the themes had been borrowed from the *mysterious* doctrines of Religion, but rather corrupted from *ministerium*, because they served as a sort of religious *worship*), *Miracles*, because they treated of the supernatural doings of Prophets and Apostles, Saints and Monks, *Moralities*, in which virtues and vices were personified, and *Carneval Plays*, the character of which was often rather farcical than didactic, cannot, as far as they have become known to me from reading not them themselves, with few exceptions, but only in literary histories about them, at all concern us here. I imagine that in one or the other of them, turning for instance on the stories of Achitophel or Judas, some tasteless and violent tirades against suicide might be found; but I am not acquainted with them, and, were I, should scarcely feel tempted to quote them.

Some little time after the Reformation, however, when the study of Greek and Latin literature and art had been revived, the taste and culture of modern Europe could not but receive most fruitful and salutary impulses also in reference to tragic poetry, and the most prominent civilized European nations, more especially the English, the Spaniards, the French, the Italians, and the Germans, began to compose and to relish dramas conceived and represented after the fashion of the Ancients, though, of course, manifoldly modified by the progress which the human mind had made in well nigh two thousand centuries, by the difference of that Religion which had since then become universal, and additionally by the distinctive peculiarities of national character and habitude.

From out of the immense mass of such modern dramatic literature I shall select two poets for *special discussion*. Two will suffice for our purpose, since it will be easy to attach to our communications about *them* those general reflections in which we would fain indulge; and the reader must be left to gather for himself from what will be said on the next few pages why my choice has fallen upon just — Shakspeare and Voltaire.

I. Shakspeare († 1616).

Mme. de Staël (p. 367 of her already quoted anti-suicidal réflexions sur le suicide) says. „Shakspeare dit en parlent du suicide:“

We'll bury him: and then, what's brave, what's noble.
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us.

Whereupon she comments thus. „En effet, si l'on étoit incapable de la résignation chrétienne qui soumet à l'épreuve de la vie, au moins devroit-on retourner à l'antique beauté du caractère des anciens, et faire sa divinité de la gloire, lorsqu' on ne se sentiroit pas digne d'immoler cette gloire même à de plus hautes vertus.“

A certain M. Félix Bourquelot, in a catholicizingly earnest and thoughtful, and, as far as France is concerned, both instructive and curious, series of communications,¹⁾ which he has entitled „*Récherches sur les opinions et la législation en matière de mort volontaire pendant le moyen âge*“, after having made mention of Donne's *Bia-thanatos* (which same defence of suicide, however, was not published until a quarter of a century *after* Shakspeare's death, vide Sect. V), quotes the identical passage from *Antony and Cleopatra*, and introduces the said quotation with the words: „le même sentiment (i. e. the opinions broached and vindicated by Donne) existait dans l'âme de Shakspeare, lorsqu'il a dit: faisons nous ce qui est courageux et noble, etc.

Mme. de Staël and M. Bourquelot would apparently fain have us believe that *Shakspeare himself* utters the sentiment he has placed on the lips of Cleopatra, and that he, consequently, meant thereby to give his own opinion in favor of suicide. — We know that French writers in general, and for reasons easily divined, are not the persons to understand, appreciate, love Shakspeare, and it might not be impossible or difficult for a devout catholic like M. Bourquelot to discover some fashion and measure of impiety in our British antipodes equally to Corneille's stilted rhetoric and Racine's soft pathos and Voltaire's shallow philosophy. Whilst, however, he was engaged in censuring Shakspeare's pro-suicidal turn, he might have easily quoted from the very same drama other still more telling passages,

¹⁾ In the *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, T. IV, p. 470. Vide *ibid.* T. III, pp. 539—556, T. IV, pp. 242—266, and 456—475, of the years 1841—1843.

as for instance (to be silent on the „well done, and fitting for a princess“, „bravest“, „noble weakness“) these (Act IV, scene 13).

All's but nought;
 Patience is sottish; and impatience does
 Become a dog that's mad: *then is it sin*,
 To rush into the secret house of death,
 Ere death dare come to us?
 My desolation does begin to make
 A better life: 'tis paltry to be Caesar;
 Not being fortune, he's but fortune's knave,
 A minister of her will; and it is *great*
 To do that thing that ends all other deeds;
 Which shackles accidents, and bolts up change,
 Which sleeps, and never palates more the dung,
 The beggar's nurse and Caesar's.

But, whose has studied the exquisitely graphic drama under mention cannot fail to know that, besides the very tangible fact that Shakspeare is therein shadowing forth the Roman sentiments of that age (wherefore, Mme. de Staël and M. Bourquelot ought to have expressed themselves thus: S. lets Cleopatra etc. say), he manifests throughout extremely little admiration of, or sympathy with, the Egyptian Queen, so that Franz Horn was, probably, not quite in the wrong, when he undertook to show¹⁾ that S. had availed himself of sundry poetic means for the express purpose of representing the suicide of Cleopatra as *fantastic* rather than as by any means exactly sublime.

Indeed, speaking quite in general, the many German writers who have endeavored to prove that Shakspeare is the undoubted autocrat of all modern Teutonic dramatic poetry, e. g. Lessing, Goethe, Schlegel, Horn, Ulrici, Gervinus, at the very same time have endeavored to prove that he was a most clear-sighted, genuinely religious Protestant poet, nay, that the brilliant ethical loftiness of his Muse is quite on a par with her aesthetical beauty and intellectual power, and that his interest in morality is as manifest as the psychological truth of his portraitures. Whether the one or the other of them, e. g. the genial, sentimental Horn as well as the strong-headed and erudite Gervinus, may not have gone somewhat too far

¹⁾ Shakspeare's Schauspiele erläutert, 1823—1831, Th. IV, p. 70. Cf. also Th. I, p. 198; p. 274, Anm.; p. 120, Anm.; Th. II, p. 75; Th. IV, p. 27.

in this element of their enthusiastic estimate of their favorite, I will not take upon myself to decide: for each may have read himself into the poet occasionally, and thus have unwittingly misunderstood him. How, at least, should we otherwise account for the fact that (vide the pages I have already referred to at the foot of the page) F. Horn evidently lays some stress upon the circumstance that Shakspeare everywhere disapproved of suicide, whereas Gervinus, in a treatise on the ethical spirit in Shakspeare's works,¹⁾ evidently ascribes to him *ultra-liberal* opinions on suicide? Here are his own words — which, however, are not more closely explained in any part of his entire four volumes of comments on the collective dramas. „Wer so wie Shakspeare dem religiösen Wahne absagt und über Selbstmord, Zweikampf, ehrlich Begräbniß der Selbstmörder unbedenklich seine damals höchst ketzerischen Meinungen vorträgt“, u. s. w. But; what extremely heretical opinions? And when? And where? As before said, Gervinus has failed to answer these questions.

Valpy, on the contrary, would evidently fain lead the English reader to suppose that Shakspeare meant to condemn suicide; at least, in the „index to the most striking passages and beauties of Shakspeare“, affixed to the last volume of his edition, he gives s. v. suicide simply and solely a reference to the following passage in Julius Caesar (V, 1).

Cass. If we do lose this battle,
What are you determined to do?
Brut. Even by the rule of that philosophy,
By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself. I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The term of life; — arming myself with patience,
To stay the providence of some high powers,
That govern us below.

But, in the first place, this passage does not belong to Shakspeare himself at all. It is merely a *mutilated* (and, by the by, any thing but very poetically worded) extract from Plutarch (life of Brutus, c. 40) whose parallel lives, in some old English version, served our poet as the chief source of this play. The *Greek words*

¹⁾ Shakspeare, von G. G. Gervinus, Bd. IV, p. 418.

themselves will be found quoted on p. 126 of §. 30, when we are speaking of Cicero; but to what I have there said I will take this opportunity of adding a literary notice. I have in the said § taken for granted that Brutus meant by ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ λόγος μέγας a more or less large book, a philosophical treatise of some length, which he had composed. And thus the words at issue are, I believe, pretty universally understood. Kaltwasser,¹⁾ however, conceived οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ λόγον ἀφήκα μέγαν to mean: „I entirely overlooked, I myself know not how, an important point in philosophy“, viz. this one: in how far it might be permitted to a rational and educated man to take away his own life under oppressive circumstances. — Whether the words favor this interpretation, I doubt; the context, at all events, is against it; and, for my own part, I should strongly incline to adopt the usual construction which is to be met with in all other translations known to me. — But to return to Shakspeare. Does not the identical Brutus (Act. V, 5) also say the very opposite?

„Our enemies have beat us to the pit:
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves,
Than tarry till they push us.“

This much about the above verdicts and quotations. We will now look into this matter in our own fashion, independently of the various and contradictory opinions of others.

Firstly. The popular anti-suicidal faith of his time Shakspeare might be said to have brought before us on two separate occasions.

In the dialogue of the Grave Diggers (Hamlet, V, 1), we hear the first Clown asking in reference to Ophelia. „Is she to be buried in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own *salvation*?“ For, the Clown proveably here means the extreme opposite, viz. *damnation*, as the following parallel passages¹⁾ will show. Verges. „Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer *salvation*, body and soul.“ Dogberry. „Nay, that were a *punishment* too good for them, if“ etc. Town Clerk. „O villain! thou wilt be *condemn'd* into everlasting *redemption* for this.“ Subsequently, the identical Hamletan Clown employs *se offendendo* palpably for the opposite *se defendendo*, and similar Mrs. Malapropisms, as everybody is aware, constitute a part

¹⁾ Annm. on p. 429, Zb. IX of Plutarch's Lebensbeschreibungen, 1805. ²⁾ Much ado about nothing, III, 3, and IV, 2.

of that wit which characterizes the lower orders in Shakspeare's plays in general.

In *Macbeth*¹⁾ we hear the hyper-humorous, half-drunk Porter replying to himself in answer to one of his self-proposed questions as to who was knocking at the gates of *Hell*: „a farmer that hang'd himself on the expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enough about you; *here you'll sweat for it.*“

Secondly. Shakspeare lets the hero of the last-mentioned drama²⁾ exclaim:

„Why should I play the Roman *fool*, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.“

No matter, what particular Roman Shakspeare meant M. to be here alluding to, whether e. g. Cato or Otho, Shakspeare *himself*, doubtless, would have applied some very different, some less sweeping and more generous, epithet to either of them; but *Macbeth* is now *past* all clear thought and clear feeling, morally shipwrecked, blasé, desperate, though once brave and not ignoble or unintelligent: wherefore any utterance either for or against suicide from his lips is without ethical significance, just as it would be from those of his deranged, somnambulistic spouse who (Shakspeare here faithfully following *Hollinshed's Chronicle*) puts an end to her own life.

Thirdly. If Shakspeare can fairly be said to have had favorites — and why should he not, like other great dramatic poets before and after him? — among his dramatic personages, beings with whom he so far identified himself as to make them the depositaries of his own deepest thoughts, holiest feelings, inward conflicts and spiritual victories, we might not improperly (as also Gervinus would incline to do) fix upon *Hamlet* and *Imogen* as such; and, fixing for a moment upon them, what are *their* respective positions to the topic which we are investigating?

No doubt, our Poet intended the Danish Prince in the earlier portions of his career, i. e. at the period during which those suicide-soliloquies were uttered which we shall presently make mention of, to represent both a more or less profound mental, as well as an exceedingly refined moral, nature, to stand under the influence of Protestant enlightenment (thence the allusion to *Wittenberg*), as well

¹⁾ *Macbeth*, II, 3. ²⁾ *Ibid.* V, 7.

as under that of sacred ecclesiastical legendary faith (thence the allusion to the specially hallowed time of Christmas), to indulge in private study (vide the incidental matter of the tablets) and to breathe on every occasion „thoughtful breath“ (whence his numerous soliloquies). If he be too weak and irresolute and confused in action, it is in part because of the very variety of his inward experiences and observations, of his but too scrupulously sceptical brooding over reasons and counter-reasons, whence also his deep melancholy and the final breaking down of his mind under the weight of a task it could not man itself to perform, and even fully to believe in. Being thus, we may justly doubt, whether he was meant by the poet to be really *in earnest* about suicide, whether he was not rather meant only to play with the mental image thereof, and gladly to find an excuse to return, when on the very frontier of his *apparent* resolve which latter was, however, in reality only an undefined desire. Thence, perchance, the self-contradictions which Shakspeare has not shrunk from leading to him, e. g. you earlier „which is itself a thing immortal like it“ as compared with the „perchance, to dream?“, and the belief in the verity of the paternal apparition as compared with the „whence no traveller returns.“ But, be all this as it may, something like Hamletan struggle and speculation would seem, when we read e. g. Shakspeare's Sonnet LXVI, which begins „tired with all these, for restful death I cry“, once to have passed through our poet's own soul in early years, and may he not have penned Hamlet's dualism and triumph in reference to suicide, partly at least, with so much sympathy and repetition by the aid of such reminiscences of his own?

O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or, that the *Everlasting* had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!

Thus Act II, scene 1. And then in that soliloquy of soliloquies („to be, or not to be“) which most of us know almost by heart, the problem:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them? —

is answered *anti-suicidally*.

As Shakspeare has *literally* transplanted the Old Northern Saga of Amleth (on which vide the interesting historical details in Dahlmann's excellent essay in his *Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der Geschichte*) into the Christian ages: so he has made the drama of Cymbeline, though it move outwardly on ancient Britannic Pagan soil, christian in *spirit*, as far at least as Imogen, this pure and prudent, gentle and firm, thoroughly healthy and unsophisticated maiden, is concerned, and also, we might say, in regard to Posthumus. The latter, though life has lost all its value for him since the supposed infidelity and death of Imogen, declares his determination not to cast the burden thereof away like a vulgar suicide, but to die rather as a valiant, patriotic warrior; and the former speaks thus: ¹⁾

Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine,
That cravens my weak hand.

Yet, after all this, what could we safely affirm touching Shakspeare's *own* real opinion on our theme? Methinks, on the one hand, so clear, calm, all-sided a thinker and reasoner on God and Man, Virtue and Vice, Life and Death had some positive principle concerning the right or wrong of Suicide also, and, on the other hand, still only glimpses may be caught, only impressions can be gained about that principle from his dramatic compositions, in which he, thereby legitimising himself as a true and great dramatic poet, puts off, as it were, his own individuality, to a considerable extent at all events, and identifies himself for the time being with what age, country, class, sex, character consistently required, willing only or chiefly that his respective poetic personalities, be they historical or be they fictitious, should act and speak as either chronicles prescribed or psychological verity demanded. Who, then, can venture to discover his creed, dogmatical, ethical, or political, in this or that particular passage or series of passages? Or, did not a Mr. Burke and M. François Victor Hugo build their theories ²⁾ on a „foundation of sand“, when the former endeavored to prove Shakspeare a *Deist*, and the latter to make out that he was a *Democrat*? My own general conception of Shakspeare as a healthy, energetic, pro-

¹⁾ Cymbeline, III, 4. ²⁾ Their respective essays, however, are known to me only through Newspaper extracts: the former in the *Examiner*, the latter in the *Nötg. Allgem. Zeitung*.

testant man and poet would incline me to augur a priori that suicide per se would find but small favor in his sight; and, indeed, the *idea-totality*, the *character-altogetherness* of his dramas would seem to me to warrant our regarding, if any *objective* utterances whatsoever on the special and delicate points which here engages our attention (a Shakspearean Moral Philosophy or Political Code must ever move rather in generalities only than in specialities), Hamlet's „the canon (i. e. law, commandment) of the Everlasting“, and Imogen's „a prohibition so divine“ as revealings of his *subjective* feelings and convictions. — At least, if choose or decide we must, the *greater* weight lies most assuredly in this direction.

For the purpose of showing how unsafe it is to infer from modern dramatic compositions their authors' veritable tenets on our topic, I will now pass on to another celebrated modern dramatist who has written also in plain prose pretty elaborately on our very subject.

Voltaire († 1778).

The widowed queen of Messene, when misled into believing that the murderer of her only son is within her reach, determines to slay him first, and then rather turn the bloody weapon against herself than espouse Polyphontes, the usurper of her husband's realm, and replies thus ¹⁾ to the dissuasions of Euryclés, her confidante:

„Quand on a tout perdu, quand on n'a plus d'espoir,
La vie est un opprobre, et la mort un devoir.“

The subject of this tragedy is, of course, taken from the mythical lore of Greece; but, turning to an entirely imaginary heroine in what is, perhaps, the very best of Voltaire's tragedies, we find this most faultless and most touching converted Peruvian maiden arguing, in the midst of her harassing trials, thus forcibly and circumstantially with herself in favor and defence of suicide. ²⁾

„O ciel! anéantis ma fatale existence.
Quoi! ce Dieu que je sers me laisse sans secours!
Il défend à mes mains d'attenter sur mes jours!
Ah! j'ai quitté des dieux dont la bonté facile
Me permettait la mort, la mort, mon seul asyle.
Eh! quel crime est-ce donc, devant ce Dieu jaloux,
De hâter un moment qu'il nous prépare à tous?
Quoi! du calice amer d'un malheur si durable
Faut-il boire à longs traits la lie insupportable?

¹⁾ Mérope, II, 7. ²⁾ Alsire, V, 3.

Ce corps vil et mortel est-il donc si sacré,
Que l'esprit qui le meut ne le quitte à son gré?
Ce peuple de vainqueurs, armé de son tonnerre,
A-t-il le droit affreux de dépeupler la terre,
D'exterminer les miens, de déchirer mon flanc?
Et moi je ne pourrai disposer de mon sang?
Je ne pourrai sur moi permettre à mon courage
Ce que sur l'univers il permet à sa rage?"

Nevertheless, the view which Voltaire takes of suicide in those *four* separate essays of his ¹⁾ in which he has treated of it from a moral and legal standing-point, is somewhat, if not essentially, different. That some moralists, e. g. Moore and Ammon, the former by insinuation, the latter without hesitation, have numbered him among the modern defenders of suicide, I know; but I cannot exactly agree with them on this point. We must not, without examining and analysing the much he has written, allow ourselves to be carried away by the mere unedifying sound of his *name*, must not suspect, proscribe, anathematize him at once, must rather, to use the vulgar, but graphic, proverb, give „even the Devil his due.“

The Essays referred to at the foot of the page, though published in different portions of the dozens upon dozens of volumes which bear evidence of his great literary industry and vain-glorious endeavor after universal knowledge, are merely a repetition, enlarged or abridged, the one of the other, and, indeed, as far as argument or assertion are concerned, almost in the very same words. Indeed, upon the whole, no writer I am acquainted with repeats *himself* so frequently and with such naïve effrontery and telling pertness as this same celebrated savant or rather notorious wit. Furthermore, whoso may have familiarized himself with Voltaire's peculiar manner of discussing philosophical questions and handling historical topics, and knows how he skips about everywhere, never tarrying long enough over any subject to investigate it in all its bearings, or to exhaust the pros and cons of evidence, and how he annotates capriciously and scoffingly, sometimes *contradicting himself*, and some-

¹⁾ Dictionnaire philosophique, art. de Caton, du suicide, T. 27, pp. 507—520 of Beuchot's edit. of the Oeuvres de Voltaire, 1831. — Dict. phil. art. Suicide, ou l'homicide de soi-même, T. 32, pp. 253—256. — Commentaire sur le livre des délits et des peines, §. XIX. Du suicide, T. 42, pp. 462—465. — Prix de la justice et de l'humanité, art. V. Du suicide, T. 50, pp. 267, 268. — Cf. also his critique on Montesquieu as referred to in §. 13, and his note on Olympe a part of which we shall quote by and by.

times *stating a falsehood*, will scarcely wonder, if nothing very firm, clear, profound or consistent should display itself as the net result of his repeated articles on our theme.

Methinks, after a careful perusal of all he has written specifically on this matter, the substance might be stated about thus. He tries in his peculiarly superficial manner to explain and account for suicide, but does not excuse it; he sometimes, perhaps, appears even to apologize for it, but yet he certainly does not justify it exactly. Of course, a man like him has no remedy to propose against it, no light to shed upon it, no counsel to impart about it, no aid of any sort to offer in the matter. Nevertheless, the generality of instances appeared to him trivial, rash, stupid, and he evidently disrelishes, satirizes them, and is not by any means disposed to laud or to vindicate them. He would, doubtless, not have regretted the cessation of suicide altogether, but he would scarcely have given himself any trouble to put it down. Only if ridicule could counteract it, might he be said to have written against it; a direct and devout anti-suicidal moral purpose would be sought for in vain in his essays; and his flippancy and levity, when speaking of it, often have the appearance of an utter indifference to it in an ethical point of view; nay, no doubt, this is nearest the truth: it was *morally* an Adiasphoron to him, nothing more and nothing less. Should he have affirmed that it is a wrong, a sin, a crime? Ere people can be expected to be so bold as to do so, they must be thoughtful and earnest, and must believe and proclaim man's creature-relation to a Divine Maker the Alpha, and the responsibility of all human agency to an Eternal Judge the Omega, of their religious alphabet; but this is not everybody's gift and style, and was most decidedly not Voltaire's. When he strove so eagerly and rudely to hurl down the temple of Christian *Dogmatics*, his sacrilegious and iconoclastic rage might not extend also to the altar of Christian *Ethics*; yet, *sacred* in his sight that altar itself was not exactly, and, if he approached it, he did not do so with reverence; if he touched it, he did not do so with delicacy. But, upon the whole, he had a considerable measure of respect for the laws upon which the social fabric rests, as far as they were manifestly and proveably useful and salutary, and possessed too keen a mental vision to attach himself to mere paradoxes or dressed-up lieux communs..

I shall have to scatter various passages from the above quoted

Essays through this Treatise of ours (vide e. g. §§. 34, 48, 64, 67, 77); therefore, a few isolated quotations may suffice for the present in proof of what I have just observed.

It did not seem to him, and rightly so, that the trite and hollow epithets weakness, cowardice, insanity etc. either explained the phenomenon of suicide, or exhausted such sort of censure as some might be disposed to lay at its door. „Force“ appeared to him to lie in this action, albeit „la force d'un frénétique“, and „courage“, albeit „triste courage“, and the contagion of fashion („la mode“), albeit of a *strange* fashion. „La véritable raison, c'est que la mode n'était pas alors à Paris de se tuer en pareil cas, et cette mode était établie à Rome.“ By this dictum he explains the non-suicide of the Duke of Montmorenci etc. as compared with the suicide of Cato Uticensis, etc. Of course, the term is flippant, and is not the most appropriate one; a fashion itself is only an effect and a result of other anterior phenomena and causes, and a *suicide-epidemic*, as far as we may accord psychologic and historic truth to such a fact, is not a thing to be lightly dealt with. „Les apôtres du suicide nous disent qu'il est très permis de quitter sa maison quand on en est las. D'accord; mais la plupart des hommes aiment mieux coucher dans une vilaine maison que de dormir à la belle étoile.“ This is a witticism the moral of which is sufficiently obvious. „Je reçus un jour d'un Anglais une lettre circulaire par laquelle il proposait un prix à celui qui prouveroit le mieux qu'il faut se tuer dans l'occasion. Je ne lui répondis point: je n'avais rien à lui prouver; il n'avait qu'à examiner s'il aimait mieux la mort que la vie.“ The story I incline to doubt; but, whether fact or fiction, it bears testimony to Voltaire's *neutral* position to our topic in general, though he on a particular occasion actually disadvised suicide (§. 19).

Our *historical survey* of this portion of our subject may here close; but we will not conclude this §, without having boldly asked, and to the best of our imperfect insight into matters of this description clearly answered, the following seasonable question: is the *modern christian* dramatist as such, whether he desire to afford genuine æsthetic edification, or even genuine moral instruction, or only genuine recreative entertainment, wise and right in incorporating with his work vindications of, encomiums on, self-destruction, aye, in rendering this action as such so frequent and prominent a feature in the dramatic plot?

If a modern christian poet select for his subject personages of *Greek* or *Roman story* touching whom actual history prescribes suicide, or choose to echo *Classical mythic themes*, to which the same issue appertains, he must needs have recourse to the introduction of suicide. Brutus and Cato, for instance, have proved favorite subjects, and they are, methinks, very fit ones; for, the fundamental idea of *all* tragic poetry, because that of all heroic life, of all exalted action, is the principle involved in conflicts kindred with those to which e. g. Brutus and Cato individually were doomed: characters more or less noble and ideal, struggling with, battling against, the coarse realities, the hostile manoeuvrings of common, vulgar life, and experiencing that, after all, at least *external, apparent* victory is achieved by subtle intrigue, by low prejudice, by brute force in their respective ages and environments. Aye, and, as we shall learn in the next Section, according to the preponderating views in classical paganism, suicide was a legitimate and sanctioned last refuge for virtue, when sorely afflicted, for woes, though accidentally evoked, for disappointments experienced and even for menacing disasters: wherefore, too, it was occasionally and in its proper place an appropriate solution of the tragic knot. Consequently, if a modern christian poet, having made choice of such themes, but place himself on antique ground, inhale antique air, remain faithful to the antique spirit, no objection can be fairly made, even on *ethical grounds*, to the suicidal catastrophe of his performance. I will instance in this respect the most suicidal of all Shakspeare's tragedies (vide, besides Brutus and Cassius, also Claudia, Titinius, Casca), viz. Julius Caesar, in which Antony even pronounces on the suicidal Brutus, as a paragon of *Roman Paganic* excellence, the well-known epitaph:

His life was gentle; and the elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, „This was a man!“

But, by way of an instance of the contrary, we will also cast a glance at what once was or still is, in the sight of some, despite its iambic rhetoric and labored statuesqueness, an equally celebrated English drama, Addison's only tragedy. Many of my readers already know¹⁾ that Eustace Budgell, when he anno 1737 put an

¹⁾ Vide Boswell's Tour with Johnson to the Hebrides, p. 50.

end to his life, left on his writing-desk a slip of paper on which the aphorism was inscribed „what Cato did, *and Addison approved*, cannot be wrong.“ (However, he was also in other respects a worthless individual, and had in vain endeavored to persuade his daughter to accompany him into a voluntary death.) But, few of my readers may remember that two earnest and intelligent clergymen, the Presbyterian Bogue and the Independent Bennett, in their bulky and dry, but liberal-minded and instructive, ecclesiastico-historical joint-work expressly lament ¹⁾ that Johnson had not succeeded in obscuring poetically the fatal glory of the author of Cato whose suicide — NB. in the tragedy under mention — becomes a „splendid“ sin, etc. And still less might the English reader incline to suspect that Voltaire himself would have, in a note affixed to one of his own tragedies, ²⁾ found fault with our tragedy for a similar ethico-practical reason. „Le suicide est une chose très commune sur la scène française. Il n'est pas à craindre que ses exemples soient imités par les spectateurs. Cependant, si on mettait sur le théâtre un homme tel que le Caton d'Addison, philosophe et citoyen, qui, ayant dans une main le Traité de l'immortalité de l'ame, de Platon, et une épée dans l'autre, prouve par des raisonnements les plus forts qu'il est des conjonctures où un homme de courage doit finir sa vie, il est à croire que les grands noms de Platon et de Caton réunis, la force des raisonnements, et la beauté des vers, pourraient faire un assez puissant effet sur des ames vigoureuses et sensibles pour les porter à l'imitation, dans ces moments malheureux où tant d'hommes éprouvent le dégoût de la vie.“ There is, I ween, some truth in this; but the real point does not appear to me here hit. Let us rather put the matter as follows.

I cannot for one moment imagine that Addison who — the circumstance to which I am about to allude is familiar to everybody — laid something like what we might almost call theatrical stress upon dying himself like a christian, really intended this tragedy of his to be an apotheosis of self-slaughter. Therefore, if it has, nevertheless, been construed into some such sort of apotheosis by the one or the other reader or spectator, the cause would appear to me to lie in the very fact that the tone and coloring (of the fifth act

¹⁾ History of Dissenters from the revolution in 1689 to the year 1808, vol. IV, p. 40. ²⁾ Olympe, Acte V, scène 7, Oeuvres, T. VII, p. 471.

more especially) are *not* genuinely antique, Roman, Paganic, or, as we would say, using a favorite German term, *objective*: which last matter Johnson himself, in spite of his great admiration of this drama, admits, when he says ¹⁾ „the composition refers us only to the writer: we pronounce the name of Cato, but we think on Addison.“ I'll be silent about the continuous, fulsome panegyrics which (well nigh) everybody in the drama is made to deliver on the hero whose name it bears, since it is only necessary that we should draw attention to the manner in which his death-deed is dealt with. As certain as it is, on the one hand, that Cato misconceived the Phaedon, if he supposed his own case to come under the head of the exception stipulated for by Sokrates, and himself to be, consequently, a sort of Sokrates: so certain it is, on the other hand, that such exclamations or ejaculations as „Alas! I fear I've been too hasty“, and „O ye Powers. If I have done amiss, impute it not! The best may err, but ye are good“ — are as little Stoicism as they are Platonism, and not a whit more psychologically vraisemblable than they are historically warranted, and all the records that have reached us give them the lie direct. They are simply a sort of Addisonian sentimentality by which the real facts were to be softened down into something more palatable to modern christian taste, but by which — so ill-timed, so misplaced was it — the veritable character of the speaker and the genuine nature of his action were at once necessarily destroyed, and by which we are induced to substitute in thought for the coldly philosophical Cato, as he is represented throughout the remainder of the play, all at once the christian reasoner and moralist on the action at issue, viz. Addison. Ergo, the ethical mischief would have to be sought for in the unseasonable apparent attempt at a *compromise*, as it were, between classic Paganism and genuine Christianity which compromise is vain, because the two systems separate very widely on the point under consideration, as we have seen already and shall still see far more fully in many parts of our Treatise.

We now turn to the modern *social drama*, or what we might denominate thus. It, too, cannot exactly dispense with suicide, and for very simple reasons: suicide still often occurs in the life around us, and must therefore find a place in the representation of such

¹⁾ Vide his Preface to the works of Shakspeare.

life; suicide has in very many instances psychological probability in its favor, and therefore the dramatization of human nature in general cannot properly overlook it. However, the mere *commission* of suicide by hero or heroine is one thing, and the manifest *glorification* of it by the poet is another thing. But, if we desire to arrive at distinct results, we must again descend somewhat to specialities.

Of course, the modern christian dramatic poet is at liberty to exhibit criminality even in its extreme potency and its most monstrous form, provided that the criminal still retain a touch and remnant of our common human nature, and be not an utter alien and nondescript, so that we behold in him or her mere, though utmost, *aberration*. This is one axiom; another is this: the christian tragic writer ought to let the sinner at last of his own accord experience, or by others be made to discover, that sin is error, the greatest and direst error man can fall into, and that „its wages are death“, and cannot but be death, in one shape or the other. Any different catastrophe is essentially beside the inward fitness of things, as we would define so-called „poetical justice“, whether we consult the deepest code of Nature, or the clearest code of History, or the highest code of Ethics; and, whilst feeling sure that it is unchristian, I incline to believe that it is unaesthetical also. — Here, then, *three* outlets seem to suggest themselves pretty readily.

The first of them is this: the criminal is given up by the Nemesis unto dogged desperateness and a violent death at the avenging hand of a third party, falls e. g. in battle. Take Shakspeare's Macbeth and his Richard the Third for exemplifications. — The second of them is this: submission to the requirements and institutes of our social fabric by awaiting the penalty and doom they ordain, and, if you like, by haply expecting some measure of Divine Mercy still, not in consequence of, but yet in connexion with, such submission. Compare in this respect e. g. Schiller's Karl Moor. — The third of them is — *suicide*, and as illustrations we might consider Othello (Shakspeare has in this matter preferred, and very wisely so, deviating from the disgusting and absurd *conclusion* of the story as given by the Italian moralist, Giraldi Cinthio, his source), Orosmane (in Voltaire's Zaïre, more or less palpably an imitation of Othello, but immeasurably inferior to the English prototype), and Franz Moor (in that redaction of the Robbers in which he strangles

himself; for Schiller somewhat needlessly¹⁾ also composed another end for him, viz. his being cast into a dungeon).

The paramount *theatrical* effect of this last mentioned issue there is no denying: its power lies in its immediateness. We have been made eye-witnesses to the iniquities committed; our utmost indignation, abhorrence, disgust have been aroused and kindled, and we would fain, as it were, also see in the most direct and palpable manner the visitation brought home to the sullied doers of irreparable injury to the innocent sufferers. Even as our sympathy with the victims may be said to have been excited into a *passion*, so likewise our horror of the victimizers has, we may say, been heightened into a *passion*; and passion craves something tangible, would not be content with, might positively distrust, mere *asseverations* of compunction, mere *tears* of repentance, mere *passive* awaiting of sentence and punishment, whereas there is no disbelieving the irrevocable deed of self-inflicted death: it is, as the case may be, either the most impassioned, or the most deliberate, atonement which the defeated, or the awakened, sinner can make; and it is, at all events, an exhibition of strength to the last, of that kind of strength at least which characterizes *great* criminals, and with strength of a sort to the end the poet must endow them, unless he would render them mawkish and despicable, i. e. undramatic. — Were one to object — using an expressive phrase which will be found thus applied in Leisewitz's tragedy *Julius von Tarent* — that such a self-slaughtering procedure is only „heaping sin upon sin“, we might reply — using a profound remark in Schiller's drama of *Wallenstein* — that „this is just the curse of the evil deed that it must ever on engender evil.“ Accordingly as are the collateral circumstances, it is possible that the issue under mention may only make us detest the criminal all the more as a dastardly fugitive from consequences (this is, perhaps, the case with Franz Moor); or, that it may tend considerably to reconcile us to him (as is, doubtless, the case with Othello): but in either case, according to my own impression, the tragic writer has done his duty; for, whether we detest the self-slain evil-doer still more, or whether we rather incline to compassionate him, human destiny has been faithfully shadowed forth, and

¹⁾ Cf., however, in this respect what Schiller himself says in one of his most brilliant minor essays (*Ueber den Grund des Vergnügens an tragischen Gegenständen*), viz. the sentences „Wenn der Verbrecher — ihm gebieten.“

the rights of the moral world are vindicated. — Only, however, the tragic poet dare not expect and induce us *entirely to pardon*, and still less *fondly to admire*, the antecedents of such characters on account of their catastrophe.

An equally frequent and fit, and, perchance, a loftier and more genial theme, however, for the christian dramatic poet is a noble and an ideal character enduring such struggle and doing such battle as I already delineated, when speaking of Brutus and Cato. Let us, by way of example, instance Shakspeare's Hamlet and Schiller's Max Piccolomini and Thekla as belonging to this category of tragic characters; but here we will venture to draw attention as briefly as may be to that specific difference between Paganism and Christianity to which we a while ago alluded, and in so doing to state what we humbly consider the principle of christian Aesthetics in union with that of christian Ethics, as far as the point at issue is concerned.

We need not now go to Aristoteles for tuition. I know some little about what two dozen or so of translators with their comments have produced,¹⁾ by way of shedding light on, or casting darkness over, his one dozen or so of words (δι' ἑλπίου καὶ φόβου περαινύουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν). Whatever the Stagirite meant, or did not mean, his *canon* was simply *his canon*, made from the Greek tragedies which lay before him, howsoever valuable and acute and correct it may be, or may not be. Let others, better qualified for suchlike definings than I am, dwell on it; my individual extremely small amount of aesthetical lore is pretty much limited to what everybody's sound common sense and sound moral feeling may justly lay claim to; and one grows somewhat tired of that often very schoolboyish everlasting appeal to Aristotle. — Surely, then, not only the *exciting* of the passions and the *moving* of the feelings are the proper object of christian tragedy, but also, and in a still greater measure, the *pacifying* of the passions and the *elevating* of the feelings. But how, if the virtuous sufferer, the noble struggler, the amiable martyr, the heroic „fighter of the good fight“ be made to succumb at last to suicide? Is therefrom reconciliation with Destiny eliminated? healing for the Spirit extracted? Verily,

¹⁾ Vide Fried. von Raumer's essay Ueber die Poetik des Aristoteles in seinem Verhältniß zu den neuern Dramatikern, published in his Historisches Taschenbuch for the year 1842. pp. 133—247.

no! We rather are bid to listen to a special voice of discouragement, and to enter a methodic school of despair. It is tragic enough, and is no more than tragic, that the thoughtful, the earnest, the pure should occasionally perish *outwardly*, lose property, liberty, life; but, in forty nine cases out of every fifty, suicide is a sign of *inward* defeat, and such defeat is *more than* tragic, is simply harrowing, darkening, debilitating, nay, is even, we might almost say, *un-tragic*, *anti-tragic*, in the deep sense of high tragedy. „The World may kill the body, but the soul it cannot kill“ — this well-known New Testament axiom has ever appeared to me also the watchword of all christian tragic poetry. One of the earliest christian tragedies bore the title „Christus patiens.“¹⁾ The subject may have been unfortunately chosen; but the spirit which such a literary phenomenon indicated, was, I ween, the right one. Every truly heroic life, from a Paul to a Luther and from a Luther to a Schiller, though, perchance, often shaken, and even sometimes sullied, yet ultimately vanquishes all inimical world-powers and time-influences, is brave to encounter, and patient to endure, whatsoever may come, but never surrenders, never gives up its spiritual weapons unto the opposing foes, even unfaith and despair, whose work is, among other things, suicide.

That, however, our Stage *as it is* could do with exactly a perfectly christian hero, we must incline to doubt; but who can doubt that our Stage *as it ought to be* would bear with at all events an *approximatively* christian hero, and be in every respect thereby a gainer? — Which last remark painfully reminds me of a third class of dramas which, in reference to our immediate topic, we must not entirely ignore.

If in almost every modern even *truly classical* English, French, German higher species of tragedy, suicide, contemplated, menaced, or consummated, enacts a part, what shall we say to that all but countlessly numerous class of *anything but* truly classical *domestic dramas*, *melodramas*, and *Destiny-plays* which, more especially during the present century, have overflowed the theatres, and managed to render themselves extremely popular with the multitude among our coteremporaries? Pieces in very many of which every

¹⁾ It is generally ascribed to the churchfather Gregory of Nazianz; I know it, however, only by name and reputation.

species of folly, passion, vice, crime which does, or can, lead to suicide, is displayed in the most shameless profuseness and wrought out with the most wanton zest, and suicide itself is depicted with mere frivolous sentimentality, or introduced with appalling levity? Müllner, Grillparzer, Heine, Victor Hugo, etc. etc. — pray, upon what principles, ethical or aesthetical, are some of their most renowned and effective pieces framed and formed? In talent such „play-wrights“ were or are most assuredly not wanting; but far better it were, had they buried it right out than that they should have used it in so unbidden and forbidding, so morbid and loathsome a manner, teaching, by implication at least, inter alia that a seduced maiden, when forsaken, and an adulterous woman, when found out, and a fashionable spendthrift, when ruined, and a gambler, when fortune has played him foul, and a drunkard, when he begins to feel the evil effects of his potations indulgences, and a dissipated coxcomb, when he can no longer make a display of himself, and love-sick girls or youths, when obstacles seem to render their love-path rugged, might as well speedily betake themselves away, by poison or powder or steel or stream, from this unpropitious earth of ours! No doubt, it does not require any great effort of imagination, or exertion of inventive power, thus to get rid of one's heroes and heroines: such Deus s. Diabolus ex machina is most convenient, when the plot grows intricate; and Police Reports, Newgate Calendars, Gaming Houses, Morgues can supply the material in abundance. But, for Heaven's sake! let us not, in the face of suchlike spectacles, talk of the theatre as a *school of morality*, a reflex of *ideal life*, a socially *beneficial* institution, an arena for *high art*, etc.

„Young argues against suicide with all his force of genius and of eloquence; and no doubt brought it on the stage in order to render it more shocking; for it forms the catastrophe of all his tragedies. Experience has, however, I conceive, sufficiently demonstrated that the natural effect of theatrical representation is the reverse. Crimes may be rendered less shocking, nay, even fashionable, by being exhibited on the stage; but I know of no man who ever took a hearty aversion to vice, and fled from it, in consequence of such exhibitions.“ Thus an anonymous annotator on Young's Night thoughts.¹⁾

¹⁾ Edit. 1804, p. 354.

Whether Young was actuated by this motive — an unpoetical one, to say the least of it — or not, I cannot say; but, as far as I can at this moment remember his tragedies which I feel no temptation to *re-read*, the said motive is anything but apparent.¹⁾ At all events, however, Heinrich Heine and his kindred-minded clique in Young Germany and the purveyors to the Théâtre de la Porte de Saint-Martin in Paris would not dream of putting forth any similar plea in their own case; and what the above English annotator asserts is, doubtless, fully borne out by the effects on their respective audiences. For, let us not forget that very many of those persons who most diligently frequent the theatres, second-rate ones more especially, belong to the middle or lower, the less educated and intelligent, orders of the community, or, are immature young men and susceptible young women; let us not forget that on the stage, besides the drama itself, likewise music, declamation, costume, illumination, even-tide, each and all, contribute and combine to inebriate the imagination, to inflame the passions, to evoke illusion, to foster delusion, and thus to render the audience in general doubly disposed to imbibe the moral Opium and moral Prussic Acid which certain sentences, soliloquies, and catastrophes of the dramas under mention most liberally offer. And, if we will but remember and take into earnest consideration all this and much else of what therewith more or less naturally connects itself, we shall scarcely expose ourselves to the reproach of being either puritanically zealous or unwarrantably fastidious, when we without hesitation assert that many a suicide, man and woman, youth and maid, in these our modern times, more especially in the Capitals, where dissipation lies in wait for idleness and lassitude craves excitement, might be referred to the Creed taught in this or that Drama, and brought home to the Impulse received at this or that Theatre. And, methinks, such stains of blood are even worse than merely sadly ugly and unbecoming in poet-laurels or on theatre-portals!

How remedy the evil? How remove this blot? By police-like surveillance? By government stage-licensors? In some measure, perchance. Better, however, if I mistake not, thus. O thou theatrical poet, is thy only source of inspiration a morbidly feverish

¹⁾ Vide Memnon and Mundana in his *Busiris*, Leonora and Zanga in his *Revenge*, and Erixena and Demetrius in his *Brothers*.

intoxication, which revels in blood and misery and uncleanness and madness? Or, is the only idol of thy worship the metallic pay of lessee and manager, the applausive noise of the undiscerning and the tainted? Art thou unconscious of any mission, except from the Devil, and of any vocation, except for the Devil? Or, holdest thou a charter from Highest Powers, and standest thou in the service of the Noblest Cause? Well, if thou have conscience and culture and calling of right sort, we appeal to thee thyself: if thy words be thy works, and „follow after thee“, will they not testify loudly and strongly against thee, and will not the spirit-jury on the day of final trial, from which there is no escape and no appeal, utter its Mene Tekel against thy rule and realm? Even the Heathen Muse would *blush* at thy productions; the Christian Angel might *weep* at them. — —

If the one or the other reader find the last eleven pages disproportionately minute, I will not conceal from him my own misgivings about them, whilst I was penning them. Yet, the subject seemed deserving of a far more searching discussion than Mendelssohn in the 9th and the 13th of his already quoted *Briefe über die Empfindungen* had bestowed upon them, or Krug in the likewise already mentioned article in his *Handwörterbuch der Philosophie*, and neither Staudlin¹⁾ nor Wessenberg²⁾ in their respective moralizing histories of the drama had done more than with a very few words merely hint at our topic as one of the occasional excrescences in the offsprings of Melpomene.

In this § I have, however, ignored *Comedy* altogether, because, though I am aware that also into Comedies and even Vaudevilles suicide has been now and then introduced — of course, however, only the *design* from ludicrous motives, and a humorously foiled *attempt* —, I cannot but think that it is not a topic for jesting about, and that ridicule is not the fittest weapon to be used against it, except in very exceptional instances, such a one e. g. as is recorded to us in the life of the great comic writer Molière.³⁾ At Auteuil, his residence, about four miles out of Paris, La Chapelle, Boileau, Mignard, Lafontaine, Lulli and others were sitting one summer-evening at supper, philosophizing over their wine about the

¹⁾ Geschichte der Vorstellungen von der Sittlichkeit des Schauspiels, 1823. ²⁾ Ueber den sittlichen Einfluß der Schaubühne, zweite Auflage, 1825. ³⁾ Vido Zachokke's Biographie Molière's, pp. 92, 93.

value of friendship and of life, and getting ever more and more visionary and enthusiastic. Molière sipped quietly his milk, left the revellers to their dithyrambic humor, and went to bed. The more they drank, the more trivial the form of life appeared to them. At last, they determined, in order to have the pleasure of being able to die together, to throw themselves one and all into the neighbouring river. Young Baron (an actor) who was present, ran to Molière, awakened him, and made him acquainted with the heroic resolve of his guests. Molière forthwith joined the enthusiastic circle, complained bitterly of their intention to execute their glorious design without him, and said that he would be of their party, exclaiming at the same time: „but, so beautiful a deed must be performed in bright day-light, so that everybody may see it, not in the darkness of the night.“ — His opinion gained applause; each went to rest, and — arose sober.

Miss Martineau assures us¹⁾ that „the practice of suicide was lessened in France by ridicule and contempt.“ But, *when* did this lessening take place? And by *whose* or *what* ridicule? Alas! in §. 76 we shall learn by dint of the unshakeable evidence of *official figures* that in our time at least the said assertion would in vain seek for foundation in facts. Moreover, as we said before, some few individual cases of suicide may be both ridiculous and contemptible; but suicide in and by itself is not by any means either the one or the other. We may abhor it, and must deplore it; but make light of it we cannot, nor ought we to convert it into a joke.

§. 19. Didactic poetry.

No doubt, in a certain sense and to a certain extent of the term, all poetry, if it is to possess any intrinsic value beyond the mere jingle of words, must needs be didactic, i. e. *teach* (*didachonai*) something; but, of course, the mere and direct purpose of teaching, without any adventitious by-purpose and artistic environment, would of necessity cease to be poetry at all. However, leaving this matter, the science of Aesthetics has at all events settled to denominate certain forms of poetic utterance (e. g., besides such generally some-

¹⁾ Society in America, vol. III, p. 94.

what lengthy productions as are properly called didactic poems, also the poetical epistle, the satire, the epigram) specifically didactic, and we humbly bow to its decision in this particular. — Indeed, if the *mere form* of the utterance did not interfere, we might place suchlike compositions (in which the respective authors avowedly present themselves as teachers or preachers of e. g. moral or religious principles and sentiments) among Essays or Sermons, and, consequently, treat of them under the head of Ethical Philosophy. Yet, since the rhythmical or rhymed form *does* interfere, we must, according to our plan, assign to them a § in this present Chapter, merely premising what is self-understood that we shall be justified in viewing what therein occurs on our topic as the deliberate expression of the respective poets' *own* convictions and precepts.

I. Lucretius (in the 1st cent. a. C.).

More than ordinarily interesting in regard to our topic, because of his connexion with the Epicuric system of philosophy (vide §. 28), is this poet-philosopher who with searching mind, though in rugged style, with united erudition and enthusiasm, has analysed and apotheosized the tenets of the Gardens. I suppose, there cannot exist any reasonable doubt about his having been himself a decided adherent of the system which constitutes the inhold of his „de rerum natura.“ Let us think, for instance, of the extraordinary measure of praise which he bestows on Epikuros,¹⁾ and the dogmatic and emphatic manner in which he promulgates the material nature, and consequent mortality, of the soul.²⁾ And as regards our topic, despite one passage which *seems* to point a different way, we likewise cannot doubt his having gone in the pro-suicidal direction quite as far at least as the system he besang would warrant him in going. Not to lay any great stress upon the laudatory strains in which he mentions the suicidal end of Demokritos,³⁾ I will quote twenty and odd lines⁴⁾ in which he, as I take it, with eloquent energy and dramatic animation represents Nature herself as counselling those who have either enjoyed life unto satiety or, on account of old age, are unable to enjoy it any longer, voluntarily

¹⁾ Lib. III, 1056, 1057. ²⁾ Ibid. 842, 843. ³⁾ Lib. III, 1052—1054. Diogenes Laërtius, however, in his life of Demokritos, lets this laughing philosopher die a natural death at a very advanced age, he having prolonged his life as much as possible from affection for his sister. ⁴⁾ Ibid. 944—967. In Lachmann's edit. 1850, where the text is considerably altered, 931—955.

to bid it farewell as soon as possible. They, perhaps, even go further than Epikuros himself would have sanctioned.

Denique, si vocem rerum Natura repente
Mittat, et hocc' aliquoi nostram sic increpet ipsa:
„Quid tibi tanto opere est, Mortalis, quod nimis aegris
Luctibus indulges? Quid mortem congemis, ac fles?
Nam, gratum fuerit tibi vita ante acta, priorque,
Et non omnia, pertusum congesta quasi in vas,
Commoda perfluxere, atque ingrata interiere;
Quur non, ut, plenus vitae, conviva, recedis,
Aequo animoque capis securam, stulle, quietem?
Sin ea, quae fructus quomque es, periire profusa;
Vitaque in obfensio est; quur amplius addere quaeris,
Rursum quod pereat, mali, et ingratum obcidat omne?
Non potius vitae finem jacies, atque laboris?
Nam, tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,
Quod placeat, nihil est: eadem sunt omnia semper.
Si tibi non annis corpus jam marcet, et artus
Confectei languent; eadem tamen omnia restant,
Omnia si perges vivendo vincere secla;
Atque etiam potius, si numquam sis moriturus“: —
Quid respondemus, nisi justam intendere litem
Naturam, et veram verbis exponere caussam?
At, qui obitum lamentetur miser amplius aequo,
Non merito inclamet magis, et voce increpet acri?
„Aufer, ab hinc, lacrumas, harathre, et compesce querelas.“

The apparently anti-suicidal passage¹⁾ I above hinted at is, however, this. The poet has been speaking of a number of vices and passions in which men indulge for the purpose of either supporting or prolonging their lives, and then takes occasion to express himself in an emphatic manner against the commission of suicide from such very hatred of life as arises out of simple fear of death.

„Et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae
Percipit humanos odium lucisque videndae,
Ut sibi consciscant moerenti pectore letum;
Oblitei fontem curarum, hunc esse timorem;
Hunc, vexare pudorem, hunc, vincula amicitia
Rumpere; et, in summa, pietatem evortere suadet.“

But, suchlike decided antagonism, whether uttered smilingly, scoffingly, or contemptuously, to suicide, from the motive or on the ground here assigned, is common to Epikurism and Stoicism equally

¹⁾ Lib. III, 79—84.

(vide §§. 28, 29), and is, therefore, of necessity very far from militating against the countenancing of suicide in the abstract and absolute, as I could now easily prove by sundry passages in Lucretius' fellow-poets Lucanus and Martialis: however, various passages of this sort will present themselves to us of their own accord in the course of our Treatise, so that we may for the present take the matter as incontestable for granted; nor do I think it necessary to specify christian writers who have not hesitated to adduce passages of this kind as Paganic anti-suicidal dicta.

NB. The reader might, perhaps, expect me to take notice here of the story that Lucretius himself, in his 44th year, impelled by a potion of the so-called philtrum, took away his own life, or something very similar. The said story, I am led to believe, is to be found in Eusebius; but, since modern critical writers generally consider it improbable,¹⁾ I had better cast it undiscussed among the fables which the pious churchfathers in their holy zeal not unfrequently but too eagerly believed about pagan writers to whose principles they were averse, and to whose lives or deaths they felt strongly tempted to attach some more or less questionable piece of unwisdom or immorality, in which particular pious later writers have evinced a considerable penchant to follow them with credulous haste.

II. M. Terentius Varro (in the 1st cent. a. C.).

This cotemporary and friend of Cicero's, of whose almost incredibly numerous writings on well nigh every possible topic only some few fragments are still extant, wrote sundry didactico-lyrical effusions — partly in verse, and partly in prose — which he entitled *saturae Menippeae*, which designation bids us recal to mind the Cynic Menippos, of whom Lucian makes so much use in his Dialogues of the Dead and other works, and who, having expended his life upon lashing the vices and philosophems of his time, ultimately strangled himself (vide §§. 27, 28). — The 69th of these same Menippean satires,²⁾ now, bears the title *περὶ ἐξαρωγῆς*: — inasmuch, however, as only very imperfect relics of the prose-poem itself have remained to us, there is certainly some little difficulty in divining its purport, i. e. to what extent exactly it was pro-suicidal or the con-

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Bähr's *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur*, Ausg. 3, B. I, p. 306; and the English reader might peruse with interest the lengthy dissertation which Good has prefixed to his translation of Lucretius. ²⁾ M. Terentii Varronis *saturarum menippearum reliquiae*, edid. Oehler, 1844, pp. 190—192.

trary. We will, therefore, briefly benote each of the six extant verses. V. 1. Annibal's poisoning himself is adduced, and evidently approved. V. 2. Also Andromeda's voluntary death ditto. Here, however, already a difference of opinion would seem to prevail among the commentators, unless the probare in what Mercerus (ad Non. p. 745, as quoted by Oehler) avers „quam non probavit Varro“ is here to be taken not in the meaning of „to approve.“ V. 3. „Non vituperamus, cum sciamus digitum praeidi oportere, si ob eam rem gangraena non sit ad brachium ventura.“ The meaning of which words I take to be: if by suicide, and by it only, as a desperate remedy, some menacing *moral* evil may be successfully averted, suicide is defensible. And, supposing this to be their meaning, we here encounter a somewhat foolish simile which later pro-suicidal moralists have, nevertheless, frequently had recourse to, viz. that of cutting off a gangrenous limb to save the remaining portions of the body: foolish, because it might, perhaps, be even more appropriately employed as an anti-suicidal argument, inasmuch as the submitting to a painful amputation for the purpose of *saving life* proves the intense love of life and how much man will endure rather than die. V. 4 — as reduced by Beier to what those better versed than myself in suchlike matters term Bacchic metre:

„quemnam te esse dicam, ferá qui manú cor-
poris fervidós fontium áperis lacús san-
guinis teque víta levás ferreo éne?“

Which lines appear to convey *censure* of, at all events, some instances of self-destruction. VV. 5 and 6. As far as they are intelligible to me, they are better left undiscussed, for reasons which anybody who may care to refer to them, can ascertain for himself.

So far our own simple analysis. Oehler himself has not, as far as I remember, given any clear opinion of his own on the ethical drift of this satire, on which some of the previous commentators and editors had entertained views directly opposite one to the other. For instance, Gataker in his notes on Marcus Aurelius (Opera, vol. II, p. 62, vide §. 29) pronounces it to have been intended as a defence of suicide according to the genuine principles of the Stoic school, whereas the later nameless editor of 1788¹⁾ affirms that it

¹⁾ M. Ter. Varronis de lingua latina libri qui supersunt cum fragmentis ejusdem, vol. I, pp. 301, 302, and more especially vol. II, p. 377.

„*exagitat* forticulos illos, qui cura aliqua graviore oppressi, aut adducti in extremum vitae discrimen, sibi ipsis mortem consciscunt.“ As regards myself, I can scarcely hesitate to adopt Gataker's view, as far as the above fragments may really be said to afford „argumenti totius gustum aliquem“; but, at best, any verdict that can be given on the satire under mention is a somewhat *ex ungue leonem* affair.

III. Horace (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

We now tread ground more familiar as well as more interesting to most readers; we will, however, not on that account launch out into any unnecessary details. — If I mistake not, this, as regards my own taste at least, but all too much admired Roman poet was an Epikurist, *more at least than aught else*, and at all events practically, i. e. as far as his life and conduct were concerned: nor are by any means passages wanting in his writings which tend theoretically the same way.¹⁾ The late Dr. W. E. Weber, in his very circumstantial, but equally confused and, according to my own feelings, unwarrantably encomiastic, nay, even extremely flippant, monograph on our poet, does not mention the passage I have just alluded to in the note, but says²⁾ in reference to another not very dissimilar one „die Epikureische Andeutung müssen wir als eine isolirte Ansicht betrachten“ u. s. w. Yet scarcely so, as I have already hinted, but, if I mistake not, rather thus: as a *veritable* Roman, Horace demanded something more positive and practical than e. g. Platonism, to which almost no passage in his works can be said fairly to rise; and as a Roman of the *worst* times, he preferred upon the whole, as man and moralist, the enjoyments of the Gardens to the actions of the Portico, though he had, as we know, when a young man fought with Brutus at Philippi, and though, as we shall immediately see, touches of Stoicism are doubtless ever and anon to be met with in his poetry. Prof. Teuffel, in a most interesting and thoughtful monograph, gives his own opinion on this matter as follows. „Horaz ist Eudämonist, Aristipp ist sein Ideal und wo er es nicht ist, da hat dieß wieder seinen Grund in einer aristippischen Richtung. Mihi res, non me subjungere rebus! war der Wahlspruch des Horaz sein Leben lang.“ „Er gehörte keiner philosophischen Schule an (Ep. I, 1, 14 ff.),

¹⁾ E. g. Sat. I, 5, 101sq. the confession of faith „namque Deos dicici“ etc. ²⁾ Outinus Horatius Flaccus als Mensch und Dichter, 1844, p. 220, and cf. also p. 356. ³⁾ Charakteristik des Horaz, 1842, pp. 55, 58.

er war Eclectiker. In seiner Jugend zwar scheint er sich an Epikur gehalten zu haben (Sat. I, 5, 101); jedenfalls aber emancipirte er sich später auch von diesem freiwillig übernommenen Joch.“ And more completely on the same question the same writer in a somewhat later excellent little work of his.¹⁾ Inasmuch, however, as both Epikurism and Stoicism would almost in equal measure lead him to vindicate suicide, he has not evaded the temptation to do so, whensoever a fit opportunity presented itself. We must in this § pass by his *lyrical* effusions (e. g. his eulogies on Cato, Carm. I, 12, 35, and II, 1, 24), and, limiting ourselves to his strictly *didactic* poems, viz. his *Epistolae*, two passages have struck me as more particularly deserving of notice and comment.

A. Lib. I, ep. 16 (ad Quintium), l. 73 sqq.

Vir bonus et sapiens audebit dicere: „*Pentheu, Rector Thebarum, quid me perferre patique Indignum coges?*“ Adimam bona. „*Nempe pecus, rem, Lectos, argentum; tollas licet.*“ In manibus et Compedibus saevo te sub custode tenebo.
Iipse deus, simul atque volam, me solvet. Opinor,
Hoc sentit: moriar, mors ultima linea rerum est.

This entire epistle, in my own humble judgment one of the most thoughtful and in sundry respects most beautiful of all Horace's similar productions, is not quite easy to understand in consequence of the very weightiness of its contents, its dialogue-form adding somewhat to the difficulty. However (the reader is referred for the *Euripidean passage itself* to what we communicated and discussed already in §. 11), my own decided impression is that Horace cannot be otherwise understood than as really intending to justify and extol suicide in the case he here supposes, i. e. *literally*: a captive, made slave of, would prefer, if he think aright, slaying himself to performing menial services at the bidding, and for the benefit, of a human master; but — *spiritually* the precept admits, as everybody must feel, of a much more extended application. Walchenauer remarks. „Voilà bien la philosophie stoïcienne dans toute âpreté, cette philosophie qui mettait sur le même niveau les moindres fautes et les crimes les plus atroces; qui, pour consacrer la liberté du sage, faisait du suicide une nécessité et un devoir.“ „Oui, certes, c'était

¹⁾ Foray, eine literarhistorische Uebersicht, 1843, p. 18.

la philosophie dont Horace se targuait quand il écrivait cette épître.^a Nor can I discern any good reason why Obbarius,¹⁾ who extracts this critique of Walchenaer's, should with apparent contemptuousness express his dissent from it. Still less can I feel disposed to agree with Wieland,²⁾ when he premises the same interpretation („Auch die Auslegung, die er nach den Grundsätzen der Stoiker von den letzten Worten des Bacchus macht, ist sinnreich und schließlich: ich kann sterben; dies ist ein Befreyungsmittel, welches Gott — ein Synonym für Natur bei den Stoikern — immer in meine Macht gestellt hat, und wodurch ich dem ärgsten, was du mir thun kannst, immer zuvorkommen kann“) by remarking that *he himself knew no better morality than that of this epistle.*

B. Lib. II, ep. 2 (ad Julium Florum), lines 212—216.

Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti;
Tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius aequo
Rideat et pulset lasciva decentius aetas.

I do not feel quite sure, whether this passage must be understood veritably of suicide. From Wieland who (l. c. *Th.* II, pp. 181, 182) argues somewhat violently, but not very acutely, as I take it, against any suchlike interpretation, I learn that e. g. Baxter, Sanadon, Batteux would appear to have expounded it of suicide. On the one hand, the simile itself seems to possess a literal meaning solely, and evidently in other parts of Horace³⁾ refers to natural death. On the other hand, however, we pretty frequently find the identical simile applied by classical poets and prosaists to actual suicide. Vide e. g. in the previously adduced passage of Lucretius the words „*plenus vitae, conviva, recedis*“; the quotation we gave in §. 13 from the Neo Platonist Olympiodor, where a rational voluntary departure out of life is likened unto a mere rising from, and quitting, a banquet on the part of a satiated or weary guest; in Seneca (ep. 58): „*prope est a timente, qui fatum segnis exspectat: sicut ille ultra modum deditus vino est, qui amphoram exsiccat, et faecem quoque absorbet*“; and cf. what will be adduced from

¹⁾ Quinti Horatii Flacci epistolas commentariis uberrimis instructas edidit S. Obbarius, 1847, T. II, p. 341 (This edition comprises, however, only the 20 epistles of the first book). ²⁾ Die Episteln des Horaz übersetzt und erläutert, edit. 2, *Th.* I, p. 259, and cf. p. 238. ³⁾ E. g. Sat. I, 1, 117—119 „*inde sit — queamus*.“

Cicero in §. 30. Moreover, the context itself of our passage — Horace is speaking of and to a person who cannot have succeeded in becoming wise and happy, unless he have banished all his many torturing passions — would seem to me fully to warrant our referring it to suicide. — — —

Let this trefoil of Roman poets suffice. Of e. g. Martial we spoke in an earlier §; and we now proceed to *modern* Christian ages, since the Book of Job will find a fitter place in our Section on Judaism, the poetic teachings of Gregorius Nazianzenus shall be reserved for our chapter on Churchfatherism, and we assigned a niche to Dante among the Epic singers.

{ IV. Young († 1765).

{ V. Blair († 1746).

I take these two clerical minstrels together, because their utterances, *anti-suicidal* of course, are pretty much to the same effect. Various brief passages from their respective didactic poems will be found quoted here and there, as the occasion seemed to call for them, in this Treatise of ours. Here their *eschatological* dicta only.

Young (N. T. V, 481, 482):

„fathomless destruction

Sure to receive, and overwhelm them in their fall.“

Blair (the Grave, lines 414—417):

Unheard-of tortures

Must be reserv'd for such: these herd together;

The common damn'd shun their society,

And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.“

We see that both of them make most energetic mention of the fate of *suicides* — for to suicides the above passages refer — in the future world, Blair even more distinctively and savagely than Young. But, their verses are alike entirely wanting in that ecstatic visionariness and minute imaginativeness, in that mystic voice which could fascinate us in the more gifted and erudite Florentine, so that we listened with wonderment, and had patience to trace and mark his significant similitudes, albeit we had no belief in them. And mere broad common sense, or common nonsense, and coarse bigotry in blank verse are just as little Poetry as they are Philosophy, would rather most properly be banished into a methodistical publication of some Religious Tract Society. If, however, Young's and Blair's vague, yet sweeping, lines needed or merited any com-

ment, I should incline simply to remind the English reader of what a most gifted and eloquent veritable ornament of our Episcopal bench in days gone-by so gently, charitably, wisely wrote ¹⁾ in reference to Virgil: „but he knew nothing of it, *neither do I*; only that suicide is not lawful. But how suicides shall fare in the other world, who, upon such great accounts, are tempted, is one of God's secrets, which the great day will manifest.“

VI. Savage († 1743).

Dr. Johnson informs us ²⁾ that this wayward and erring man had intended to write a poem called „the Progress of a Freethinker“, the hero of which was, at last, to dismiss himself into the next world by his own hand; and old Samuel regrets that his protégé and friend did not execute the said poetic design. For my own part, however, I must humbly beg leave to be excused from participating in any regret of the sort, since I most frankly avow myself not to belong to that pretty numerous class of persons among ourselves who, if so-called orthodoxy be but preached and so-called free-thinking be but belabored, are not over-sensitive about the character of the preacher and belaborer, even though he should be, as this occasionally happens, a more or less notorious vagabond and sinner. To me a confirmed drunkard, for instance, exhorting to total abstinence is a more than merely *ridiculous* exhibition; but in Dr. Johnson's time a Sir Richard Steele, even he, wrote — „the Christian Hero“, and the British Public was, I doubt not, edified by the farce.

In the almost unaccountably apologetic and eulogistic biography which Johnson has penned of Richard Savage, he assures us that the latter has given a „terrific portrait of suicide“, viz. in his *Wanderer* which, though his best, is yet, methinks, a somewhat feeble and tedious (didactic, or, as he himself called it, „moral“) Poem. Well, suicide is therein represented as tempting the Wanderer; but a celestial voice, counselling him wisely, averts the success of the temptation. The scene itself is certainly not new (vide Spenser and Bunyan, as quoted in other §§ of this Treatise), and even e. g. the following lines, ³⁾ though very striking, must be pronounced at least extremely one-sided; for despair may be simply *melancholic* as well

¹⁾ Jeremy Taylor, Works, III, p. 425. ²⁾ Works of Johnson, vol. VIII, p. 163. ³⁾ Canto II, vide pp. 29—31 of vol. II of the works of Richard Savage, 1775.

as it may be *furious*, and a gentle longing for the repose of death may be altogether disconnected from an abhorrence of life.

„Death in her hand, and phrenzy in her eye!
Her eye all red, and sunk! — A robe she wore,
With life's calamities embroider'd o'er.
A mirror in one hand collective shows,
Varied, and multiply'd, that group of woes.“

VII. Bar († 1760).

Georg Ludwig von Bar, though Hanoverian canon (Domherr, viz. in Osnabrück and Minden), would appear to have composed several of his works in French, and among them the short didactic poem¹⁾ of which we must give a brief account, since it has become a very scarce little book. It is a considerable time ago since I read it, and therefore I cannot presume to speak about its poetic merits; its main drift and plot have, however, remained on my memory. The title already conveys its anti-suicidal drift by reminding us of yon ancient out-and-out sophist (vide §. 9) who *most logically* argued his disciples into killing themselves, but *most inconsistently* did not himself follow their example. Bar, as he himself tells us, had lost some one or more than one (I forget which) of his dearest friends by suicide, and endeavors to dissuade his readers from it by attempting to depict, and he does so — for his poem is partly humorous and partly serious — with spirited irony and earnestness of heart, as irrational, cowardly, and contemptible the suicidal acts of many which had often been regarded and admired by others as the results of deep wisdom and high courage. The plot itself is this: a certain Sidney is disposed to destroy himself, but Hamilton, his friend, so successfully argues the point with him that he at last owns himself in the wrong, and abandons the design he had formed: which said names of the two disputants Bar borrowed from a drama of Gresset's²⁾ about which a word may not be here out of place. His Sidnei, Comedie (this word, however, not in the stringent sense, since the piece is rather a sort of somewhat weakly, sentimental domestic drama, something in the style of Kotzebue's *Menschenhaß und Neid*, familiarly known to us under the title of „the Stranger“), appeared 1745, and was evidently intended to operate *anti-suicidally*

¹⁾ Anti-Hegesias, Dialogues en vers sur le Suicide, avec des Remarques critiques et historiques, Hamburg, 1763. ²⁾ Oeuvres de Gresset, edit. 1788, T. II, p. 111 ff.

(cf. e. g. in the same once popular French dramatist's Edouard III, acte IV, scène 7 the words: „Savoir souffrir la vie, et voir venir la mort, C'est devoir du Sage, et tel sera mon sort“), so that the French of that day were of opinion¹⁾ that it would have been a fitter production for a London than for a Parisian public; and, indeed, the names of Sidnei, the hero, and Hamilton, the anti-suicidal philosopher, are palpably English. Sidnei had hesitated a long time about killing himself, but at last really made the attempt which, however, proved abortive through a trick on the part of Dumont, his servant, whereupon he repents some little, and becomes reconciled to life again.

VIII. Louis Racine († 1763).

It is well known that Jean Racine himself, towards the end of his life, so far inclined to become religious that he composed dramas only an *biblical* subjects, e. g. *Athalie*, *Esther*; and his modest, affectionate, but poetically much less gifted, son, Louis, would appear to have sympathized from the very outset of his own literary career with his revered parent's latest serious tendencies; for, almost all his poems are a kind of sacred lyre, treat of religious and moral themes. — Already on pp. 23, 24 of §. 17 I adduced some of his anti-suicidal critical reflections in connexion with Dante and Milton; we likewise, however, hear him, after much general matter about literature and philosophy, more especially in France, addressing in one of his minor didactic poems²⁾ the following lines to those who advise suicide as the sovereign remedy in the storms of life.

„L'instant qui nous délivre, est l'instant du naufrage.
Je le sçais; mais hélas! ennoyé de l'orage,
Irai-je demander mon repos à la mort?
Sçavans navigateurs, si c'est-là votre port,
L'asyle est plus affreux pour moi que la tempête.
Que Lucrece, s'il veut, à sa lugubre fête
Invite parmi vous son fameux Traducteur,
Qui d'un Maître si cher parfait imitateur,
Dans un lien tissu par la mélancolie,
Immole sa jeunesse au dégoût de la vie.
Pour moi peu curieux de ce tragique honneur,
Je tremble à vos Sermons, Apôtres du Bonheur;
Et quand l'Impiété qui vante son breuvage,
Cher et dernier espoir des coeurs qu'elle encourage,

¹⁾ Vide Lessing's *Hamburger Dramaturgische Blätter*. ²⁾ *Épître à Rousseau* (Jean Baptiste, of course, not Jean Jacques), *Oeuvres de Louis Racine*, edit. 6, 1750, T. III, pp. 193, 194.

Distilleroit pour moi tout le suc des pavots,
Je laisse son nectar à ces tristes Héros."

On „son fameux traducteur“, viz. Creech, vide what has been already said in the previous Chapter of this Treatise.

IX. Frederick the Great († 1786).

In the earlier portion of the 18th century, German had not as yet developed those marvellously copious native resources which have since then been found so limitlessly available for every possible form of prosaic and poetic diction. The learned generally wrote in Latin, and the dilettanti frequently in French; for, whilst many of the former had accustomed themselves to consider German inadequate to the expression of metaphysical subtleties, many of the latter deemed it unsuited to the requirements of graceful elegance. In the court-circles and diplomatic transactions of Germany, French had almost wholly supplanted the vernacular language, and Frederick himself had been educated through the instrumentality of French chiefly. Thence, even his knowledge of his mother-tongue may be said to have remained very imperfect to the last, and his contempt for it was manifestly more than proportionate to his ignorance of it (vide the epithets „schußlos, ungeehrt“ in Schiller's poem *die deutsche Muse*). Moreover, not only did his intimate personal connexion and diligent epistolary intercourse with several of the most brilliant French literary celebrities of his age considerably contribute to Frenchify him, but also the speculatively materialistic and flippantly sarcastic tendency which characterized much of the literature of France in his time cannot but be supposed to have suited his taste far better, to have enlisted his sympathies far more readily than almost any books which had until then appeared in the more sincere and homely vernacular of the more pensive and sentimental German people. In a word, Frederick labored most signally under what Schiller (vide his epigram *Grüßheit*) aptly designated as „the ague of Gallomania“: — which few simple remarks seemed to me necessary by way of accounting to the English reader for the otherwise strange circumstance that this great *German* Ruler, Captain, Lawgiver, as far as he was an Author, made use of *French* exclusively.

And Frederick's works, partly *prose* and partly *poetry*, fill a pretty considerable number of volumes, and extracts therefrom have found their way into e. g. Ideler and Nolte's *Manual of French Prose and Poetry*!

It is not of any special importance for our present enquiry that Frederick William, Frederick the Great's royal father, had himself once attempted self-strangulation by passing a rope round his neck during an attack of gouty pains which, produced by excess of wine-potations, had affected his brain, and that he was only with difficulty saved by the timely succour of his own wife.¹⁾ But, whoso has perused even only Lord Brougham's withering and one-sided invective²⁾ against Frederick, will remember that Frederick, when Crown Prince, attempted to escape by flight from the almost insufferably tyrannical surveillance of his vulgar and violent, nay, even brutal and half-mad father, and that, this attempt having been discovered and foiled, his friend Katt was executed, and Frederick compelled to witness the said execution from the window of his prison at Klistrin: in relation to which circumstance the already mentioned favorite sister of Frederick's in her Memoirs (pp. 277, 278) tells us: „Il voulut se jeter dehors, mais on le retint.“ „Il étoit tout hors de lui-même, et dans de si fortes agitations, qu'il se seroit tué si on ne l'en avoit empêché.“ And, doubtless, it was this his most painful position to his stern and pedantic parent which evoked this passage in one of his letters to Grumbkow, Minister of State.³⁾ „I have still resources, and a pistol can put an end to my affliction and my life. I do not think that the Almighty will damn me for that, but, taking pity on me, grant happiness in exchange for a wretched life.“

When Frederick had become Sovereign, we soon find him as Generalissimo of his own army engaged in the Seven Years' War, in the course of which the aspect of the Prussian arms became ever and anon extremely critical and occasionally even very disastrous. We must mention some of the events thereof by way of indicating the key to several of his utterances and effusions, poetic and prosaic, in regard to our theme.

Anno 1757, his army had been defeated at Kolin, and the Austrians, the French and the Russians were advancing to overwhelm the small forces which still remained to him; and at Erfurt on the

¹⁾ Mémoires de la Margravine de Bareith, depuis l'année 1706 jusqu'à 1742, T. I, p. 145. Vide also what she *ibid.* p. 88 tells of the difficulty six persons had bad day and night in preventing her from killing herself, whilst she was laboring under a *fièvre chaude*. ²⁾ Historical sketches of Statesmen etc., series I of vol. II. ³⁾ Campbell, as quoted in §. 6, vol. I, pp. 114, 115.

23rd of Sept. he addressed to his friend and companion, the Marquis Jean Bapt. de Boyer d'Argens, a poetical epistle¹⁾ in which he most unequivocally announced his resolution to quit life voluntarily, and assigned his reasons for the said resolve. It is very possible that this same poem is „the most beautiful“ one Frederick has penned, as Preuss calls it,²⁾ without being exactly on that account what Preuss likewise styles it „a real master-piece of poetry“; for, I doubt much, whether the great monarch can be fairly deemed (despite Voltaire's lessons and corrections) a poet at all in the deep, genuine sense of this term: he was fond of putting his thoughts and emotions into French rhymes, many of which were and remain tedious and heavy enough, though we might probably be quite safe in averring, as Preuss does in another work,³⁾ that such poems as seasons of danger and distress moved him to, were upon the whole far better than those with which he merely beguiled his speculative leisure-hours. But, taking all in all, men like him were rather organized and ordained to supply unto others material and enthusiasm for minstrelsy than themselves to besing either their sufferings or their exploits. However, a few of the vigorous and sincere pro-suicidal passages of the said poem shall here find a place.

Sans timidité, sans effort,
J'entreprends de couper, dans les mains de la Parque,
Le fil trop allongé de ses tardifs fuseaux;
Et sûr de l'appui d'Atropos,
Je vais m'élancer dans la barque,
Où sans distinction le berger, le monarque,
Passent dans le séjour de l'éternel repos.....
Vous, de la liberté héros que je révère,
O manes de Caton! ô manes de Brutus!
C'est votre exemple qui m'éclaire
Parmi l'erreur et les abus;
C'est votre flambeau funéraire
Qui m'instruit du chemin, peu connu du vulgaire,
Qu'ont aux mortels tracé vos antiques vertus.
Tes simples citoyens, Rome, en des temps sublimes
Étoient-ils donc plus magnanimes
Qu'en ce siècle les plus grands rois?

¹⁾ Oeuvres posthumes de Frédéric II, 1788, T. VII, p. 175— p. 184. ²⁾ Friedrich der Große. Eine Lebensgeschichte, B. II, p. 82. The passages of this work to which allusion will be made in the sequel stand *ibid.* pp. 175, 314, 315, 280, 281. ³⁾ Friedrich der Große als Schriftsteller, Ergänzungsheft, 1838, p. 40 ff.

Il en est encor un qui jaloux de ses droits,
 Fermément résolu à vivre et mourir libre,
 De lâches préjugés osant braver les lois,
 Imite les vertus du Tibre.
 Ah! pour qui doit ramper, abattu sans espoir
 Sous le tyrannique pouvoir
 De nouveaux monstres politiques,
 De triumvirs ingrats, superbes, despotiques,
Vivre devient un crime et mourir un devoir.
 Ainsi, pour terminer mes peines,
 Comme ces malheureux au fond de leurs cachots,
 Las d'un destin barbare, et trompant leurs bourreaux,
 D'un noble effort brisent leurs chaînes,
 Sans m'embarrasser des moyens,
 Je romps les funestes liens
 Dont la subtile et fine trame
 A ce corps rongé de chagrins
 Trop long-temps attacha mon ame."

Particularly noticeable in this poem are the words I have underlined: „lâches préjugés“ the context seems to warrant, and even to enjoin, our interpreting of the christian views, tenets, feelings, in opposition to Roman Paganism, since we must not forget that in another line Frederick expressly says „j'apprens de *mon maître* Épicure“; and the vivre devient etc. is evidently a reminiscence of a passage in Voltaire's *Mérope* which we quoted in §. 18, only stronger still, and as much more untrue as it is stronger, if criticized from the standing-point of the „lâches préjugés“ just alluded to.

With this Epître the reader might compare two others belonging to the same year, viz. one addressed (Oct. 9) to Voltaire¹⁾ who had advised him not to terminate his life voluntarily, and one²⁾ „à ma soeur de Bareuth.“ The former commences with a prose „je suis bien loin de condamner Caton et Othon. Le dernier n'a eu de beau moment en sa vie que celui de sa mort“, and ends with a poetic

„Pour moi, menacé du naufrage,
 Je dois, en affrontant l'orage,
 Penser, vivre et *mourir en Roi.*“

In the latter the following apostrophe to the Prussian people occurs:

¹⁾ Supplément aux oeuvres posthumes de Frédéric II, Cologne, 1789, T. II, pp. 389, 390. ²⁾ Oeuvres posthumes, T. VII, p. 162.

„J'oublirai sans regret le faste de mon rang,
Mais pour te relever j'épuiserai mon sang.
Oui, ce sang t'appartient, oui, mon ame attendrie
Immole avec plaisir ses jours à ma patrie.“

Proceeding to the next year, 1758, of Frederick's campaigns, we find him on the morning after his defeat at Hochkirch, the intelligence of the Margravine of Baireuth's death having additionally just reached him, thanking de Catt for his sympathy and efforts to console him, and assuring de Catt that he would not neglect anything that might extricate him from his perilous situation, but winding up the conversation with the significant words: „en tout cas, j'ai de quoi finir la tragédie.“ Whereupon Preuss says: „this refers to the poison-pills which the King carried about him to be used in case of need; but he never was made *prisoner*, which circumstance would have compelled him to go into death for the welfare of his fatherland, i. e. of his brethren; and all mischances of other kind have lain only momentarily heavily upon him so that despair could scarcely venture to approach him.“

Finally, however, it was the campaign of the year 1761 which more especially menaced our Prussian monarch with ruin; and it was in the months of November and December, whilst in his camp at Strehlen, that he composed several poetical epistles which are in theme and in spirit of such sort that nobody can peruse them without at once feeling that he approved of suicide, considered it under certain circumstances an action entitled to great praise, and contemplated committing it himself as the only means which would, in all human probability, be left to him to preserve his own royal honor intact and to benefit or save his beloved country. The poems I more especially allude to are „le Stoïcien“ (Nov. 15) „Othon“ (Dec. 1), and „Caton“ (Dec. 8). I will here merely transcribe a couple of passages from the first of the three.¹⁾ The reader is, however, urgently requested to look for a most unequivocal commentary on them in the *prose* epistle to d'Argens²⁾ s. d. Oct. 28, 1760, in which Frederic starts by saying „I look on death as a Stoic.“

„Detestant votre sort vous désirez de vivre.
Décidez-vous enfin: fatigué de vos jours

¹⁾ They are respectively contained in his *oeuvres posthumes*, T. VII, pp. 350—365, and T. VIII, pp. 26—31, 32—36. ²⁾ Preuss communicates it (S. II, pp. 280, 281) in full, translated into German. Vide it also Anglicé in Campbell, II, pp. 210, 211.

Qui peut vous empêcher d'en abrégér le cours?
Sortez de cette terre en maux inépuisable,
Et ne respirez plus sa vapeur exécrable
L'homme ici-bas tremblant, de dangers effrayé,
Est à ses yeux divins un objet de pitié,
Et devient par sa mort un objet de clémence."

Thus much in a literary point of view, as far as the King's own works are concerned. — We will now hear what even Frederic's greatest encomiasts have not hesitated to communicate as a well-authenticated fact (vide Preuss, lib. cit. B. II, pp. 314, 315, and of Campbell lib. cit. vol. II, pp. 211, 238). Lieutenant-Colonel Guichard who had entered anno 1758 the Prussian service as Major under the name of Quintus Icilius, was received into the immediate retinue of the King, and belonged to his most familiar circle, repeatedly assured M. Guibert (who has written an éloge on Frederic which, however, I have not read) that during December 1761 and in the following January the King carried *poison* about him. Indeed, this fact itself does not admit of any doubt; for, after his decease, five or six pills, consisting, it would seem, of some sort of powerful preparation of quicksilver (Aetzsublimat), were found in a narrow glass-tube, still carefully packed up.

Modern writers have judged very variously of the morality of such a position to suicide as has in the preceding pages become known to us. Here a few of their estimates, and some passing comments on those estimates.

Kant, who was, as the reader may remember, a *Prussian* subject and Professor at a *Prussian* University, places the following question among the „casuistic questions“ which he appended to his absolute and severe condemnation of suicide as such.¹⁾ „Kann man es einem großen unlängst verstorbenen Monarchen zum verbrecherischen Vorhaben anrechnen, daß er ein behend wirkendes Gift bei sich führte, vermuthlich damit, wenn er in dem Kriege, den er persönlich führte, gefangen würde, er nicht etwa genöthigt sei, Bedingungen der Auslösung einzugehen, die seinem Staate nachtheilig sein könnten; denn diese Absicht kann man ihm unterlegen, ohne daß man nöthig hat, hierunter einen bloßen Stolz zu vermuthen.“ Haply, our Sage would have acted more wisely, if he had attempted to answer the question, in-

¹⁾ Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre, Buch I, §. 6.

stead of merely concluding, over-servilely or over-delicately, with a note of interrogation. However, this is not by any means the most foolish casuistic question he puts; for e. g. he also asks, whether inoculation with the small-pox might be considered a species of suicidal procedure?!! —

Preuss was bolder, somewhat over-bold, one might feel inclined to opine, when he (in the already quoted work, *B.* II, p. 175) refers us (*ibid.* pp. 323, 324, however, his manner of dealing with this subject is merely *evasive*) right out to John XV, 13 and 1 John III, 16 as passages which, as we must suppose him to mean, justify or even bid, consequently from the standing-point of Christianity, such a mode of action; however, in the very same breath he identifies Frederic's sentiments on the subject of suicide in general with those of classical Paganism, when he says „among the ancients suicide was a deed of the highest magnanimity and the noblest liberty; and thus it appeared to Frederic into whose mind the cowardly rage for self-annihilation, in which the moderns indulge, could never enter.“ Granting this last part of the sentence, we must, nevertheless, assert that everything recorded of Frederic induces us to assume that he approved of suicide *in general*, or, at least, would have found moral wrong in hardly any instance of it. Illustrations. One of his valets de chambre, Deesen or Deis by name, having misconducted himself, blew out his brains in an ante-chamber of the Palace, and when the King, startled at the noise, was informed of what had taken place, he simply ¹⁾ observed (*vide* Campbell, vol. II, p. 346). „I did not give the rogue *credit for so much resolution*.“ S. d. Sept. 12, 1757 his masculine, fondly attached sister, the Margravine of Bai-reuth, wrote to Voltaire. „Nothing is left to me but to follow the destiny of the king, if it is unfortunate. I have never pretended to be a philosopher; but I have done my best to become one. The little progress I have made has taught me to despise grandeur and wealth; but I have found in philosophy nothing that can heal the wounds of the heart, *excepting the means of ridding ourselves of our troubles by parting with life*“ (Campbell, vol. II, p. 58). And had she not, in part at least, imbibed her views from him?

¹⁾ However, I will here annotate that Lord Mahon informs us that Lord Malmesbury, of his in a dispatch of July 29, 1775 gives „a milder version of the King's reply.“ *Vide* his *Historical Essays*, p. 204, art. Last years of Frederick the Second.

The author of the *Pleasures of Hope* speaks (vol. II, p. 212) about this matter thus. „Let me not be taken for an advocate of suicide, if I venture to confess that the right royal sentiments expressed by Frederick convince me that a monarch like him is not to be measured upon this point by the same standard as ordinary men in humble stations, and that self-murder may be in some rare cases not only an excusable but even a commendable act, nay, an act of the highest public virtue. Had the fortune of war thrown the Hero, who was infinitely more concerned for the welfare and glory of his country than for his own person, into the hands of his implacable enemies, it is evident that, if he had consented to live, he could never have regained his liberty without either renouncing his throne altogether, or at least submitting to such a sacrifice of territory as would have reduced him to plain margrave of Brandenburg. If, after considering this his position, any man of high, generous, and patriotic feeling, can declare that the noble-minded King is to be condemned for having resolved to escape either of these humiliating alternatives, let him cast the first stone — I cannot.“ And, probably, were we to address ourselves to the various other biographies which have been penned of Frederick, whether in German, English, or French, we should find the respective historians, as far as they deemed themselves called upon to moralize at all, deciding in a spirit not very dissimilar from that which breathes in the last quoted extract. But, the labor would be tedious, and is not necessary. Still less judicious or salutary would it be to draw, as some pious writers have done, a parallel between his case and that of e. g. one of his successors on the Prussian throne, Frederick William III, when Bonaparte had occupied his realm and trodden down his crown: the *behaviour* of the latter was simply as different as was his *character*, nor was his *situation* by any means an analogous one. At all events, however, the issues of their respective trials and vicissitudes equally teach that, though „hope deferred maketh the heart sick, yet when the desire cometh, *it is a tree of life*“, and that, therefore, it was wise and well in both of them to hope, trust, wait to the end.

Let us admit, as we justly must, that Frederic was a *very* King in comparison with any other monarch of his age, and that to govern and work, to suffer and triumph as he did was right royal, duteous, patriotic, putting to shame and the blush any given number

not only of dissipated and idiotic, but also of mawkish, sentimental, orthodox, bigoted crowned heads both before and since his time. And, no doubt, the resolve under mention was a perfectly *conscientious* one on his part, and one from which, probably, no human persuasion would, had the urgent case really occurred, have been able to divert him. But, whether a *firmer* faith in God, a *keener* insight into Duty would not have induced him to view the matter very differently, is another question, and a legitimate one. A *religious* man Frederic was not, nor was he a *profound* thinker, and in all probability, judging even from his own utterances on the matter, he himself was not perfectly clear and certain within himself about the exact nature of his motive, i. e. about the measure of *mere pride* and that of *pure patriotism* which actuated him. And yet, upon the relative measure of these two possible motives all highest and deepest moral estimate would necessarily have to hinge. Supposing mere pride to have been the actuating motive even, the ancient Jews would have considered it a meritorious action, as they did in the not dissimilar instance of Saul (vide §. 50), and the ancient Greeks and Romans would have accounted it an *ἀρετή*, a *virtus*, as Lucanus did the celebrated speech and famous conduct of Vulteius, one of Caesar's commanders in the war against Pompey. He had fought an entire day most bravely against a considerable body of the forces of the latter; but, at length, finding his ship entangled by ropes which the enemy had purposely laid in the sea, and seeing no way left open for escape, he exhorted his troops rather to slay one another than be made prisoners and slaves: and on the following morning he himself was slain first, and immediately afterwards all the rest. And not a few of the Stoic poet's own lines¹⁾ manifestly glorify this their exit as a signal action deed of „*virtus*.“ But Christianity, without denying itself, would have to pronounce it a decidedly criminal act: a Frederic, though captive in the power of his enemies, whoever these were, whether a debauched Louis XV or a virtuous Maria Theresa, remained „*himself still*“, and no *real degradation* had been incurred by the misfortune of warfare, and the *apparent humiliation* a true hero would bear. Supposing, however, pure patriotism to have been the actuating motive, Jewish and Classical Antiquity would have ascribed the action, as in the case

¹⁾ Pharsalia, lib. IV, 470 and the fifty and odd succeeding lines.

of Samson, Codrus, Curtius, to divine inspiration and instigation or, which is essentially the same thing, have divinized it as a deed of self-devotion (vide §. 8). But, could the disastrous issue Frederic feared occur as a matter of necessity? Was an anticipatory death the only possible preventive? Certainly not! He simply could have remained prisoner, if the conditions for his liberation had been made too ignominious for his subjects, howsoever willing the latter might have been to agree to them, and at variance with his own conscience. Neither his own People nor his Jailers could force him into accepting of a release on terms at issue with his convictions and feelings. Therefore, as it seems to me, howsoever high in the scale of moral heroism we must place the said motive *in and by itself*, the action in this particular instance would still have been at all events a *perfectly superfluous* one, if we look at all its bearings.

However, one point more.

It is not of much importance what the opinion of a man like Napoleon Bonaparte was on the matter under consideration, so that it may be pretty indifferent to us, when Preuss tells us¹⁾ that he anno 1809 said „Frederic was in the right, Frederic was in the right. If one have stood thus on the summit of glory, it would be wretched to live like a rascal“ (comme un pleutre). And it does seem very uncalled-for, when the same historian refers us²⁾ to Bonaparte's having taken poison at Fontainebleau (April 11, or rather in the night from the 12th to the 13th, 1814) as a more or less analogous case!

First of all, if Preuss accept the fact as authenticated, referring to Constant's Mémoires (troisième et dernière livraison, 1830) as his authority (which work, by the by, I have not read), he would seem to have been somewhat hasty and credulous. Here, however, first of all Anglicé the Duchess of Abrantes' animated account,³⁾ since it is, probably, not known to all of my readers. Her authority were unconnected and fragmentical communications from the Duke of Bassano; and she treats us also at some length to her reasons for not having made the narrative at issue public at an earlier period.

„This whole day (viz. after he had signed the act of his abdication) he spoke on gloomy subjects only, and especially about

¹⁾ B. II, p. 315, Ann. 2. ²⁾ B. II, p. 175, Ann. 3. ³⁾ Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes, T. XVIII, ch. 2, and ch. 7.

suicide, to which last topic he recurred so often that Marchand, his head-chamberlain, and Constant could not help being struck with the circumstance. Indeed, they consulted with each other, removed out of the Emperor's apartment an Arabian dagger and all the bullets out of his pistol-casket, and were then calmer, and relied upon their own watchfulness. — Likewise the Duke of Bassano's attention had been drawn to this conversation on a subject to which, in spite of his endeavors, the conversation always returned, as the Emperor was lively occupied therewith. The Duke conferred with Marchand, and was tranquillized by his account, before he himself, having previously requested the Emperor's permission, retired. — When he had been already some time in his apartment, however, Constant rushed in, pale and trembling, exclaiming: my Lord Duke, come immediately, the Emperor is very unwell! Whereupon the Duke of Bassano hastened to the bed of the Emperor whom he found as pale and cold as a statue. — The unhappy man had taken poison.

When he undertook the Russian campaign, Corvisard had given him a poison so subtle as to produce death in a few moments, nay, even in a few seconds. This poison was, I believe, that of Cabanis, and consisted of prussic acid which has since then become known as so terrible. Condorcet destroyed himself with this identical poison. Napoleon carried it constantly on his breast in a ring which itself was preserved in an hermetically closed little bag. As he invariably wore a woollen waistcoat, Marchand had not seen the bag for a long time, and had entirely forgotten it. — The Emperor who was convinced of the strength of this poison, which he always carried about him, in order that he might escape such a captivity as that of Francis the First, or a death which, though less humiliating than was just as cruel as a prison, saw in it constantly a means of defying fate and remaining lord of himself. It, then, he now took, after he had arranged his affairs, written everything he wished to write and bid farewell to the Duke of Bassano and his other friends, without, however, discovering the slightest suspicion of the matter in them.

The poison was, as I have already stated, extraordinarily powerful, but its subtle nature caused it easily to spoil; and in this case it had lost its potency: the Emperor suffered terribly; but he did not die. — When the Duke of Bassano saw him in his death-

like state, he rushed upon the raised portion of the bed and melted in tears, exclaiming: alas! Sire, what have you done? The Emperor, opening his eyes, gazed on him with the feelings of a heart which understood him, extended to him his benumbed hand which was quite moist from ice-cold perspiration, and said: you see, it is not the will of God that I die. He also bids me endure. ...

The Emperor was seized with violent vomiting and very painful attacks of colic. The poison took effect, death excepted. Napoleon was in the right. Providence preserved him still for new sufferings."

NB. This same lady (in the same work) denies a fact which had been published (viz. in the Gazette de France, April 15, 1814) to the effect that two pistols had been laid upon the Emperor's desk, and that they had been found on the following morning merely shoved back towards the middle of the desk.

Autommarchi, the Italian physician who attended the fallen Soldier-Caesar on his island-rock of exile, complains¹⁾ that some writings „weapon Napoleon against himself, and let him seek that death at Fontainebleau which he was to find only on Saint Helena, declares that, for his own part, he cannot recognize in the said suicidal attempt the great man he had attended, who did not allow himself to be discouraged by the blows of fate, and expresses the opinion that Napoleon would not, in his extremely confidential communications with him, have made a secret of an attempt the consequences of which must have been so important for him, as his physician, to know." Autommarchi, therefore, affirms that, at the particular period above alluded to, the storms and wounds to which Bonaparte's feelings were subjected had caused an extremely violent fit of bilious sickness, but that the thought of shortening his days had never entered his mind.

And, indeed, though I learn²⁾ that Fain, Norvins, Constant, Caulaincourt testify to the correctness of M^{me} Junot's recital, the better historians, howsoever unfriendly to Napoleon they may otherwise be, declare it a fiction. Thus e. g. Wachsmuth³⁾ and even

¹⁾ Preface to his *Memoirs or the last moments of Napoleon*. ²⁾ *Mémoires de Bourrienne*, T. X, p. 161, note. ³⁾ *Geschichte Frankreichs im Revolutionszeitalter*, 1844, T. IV, pp. 274, 275. He refers to Schoell's *Recueil de Pièces*, 6, 160, and Savary, VII, 181, and thinks that Napoleon *hoped* still, did not imagine everything over.

Colonel Mitchell.¹⁾ The latter historian, however, a most virulent hater of his hero, lets him speak of suicide before his deposition after the battle of Waterloo. Still more striking, however, are the late Lord Holland's (whose lady's benevolence towards, and admiration of, the discrowned monarch are well-known) communications on this matter.²⁾ „In the reasons he alledged against suicide, both in calm and speculative discussion and in moments of strong emotion, such as occurred at Fontainebleau in 1814, he implied a belief both in fatality and providence. After assigning worldly reasons for not killing himself, he added: *aussi ne suis-je pas tout-à-fait étranger à des idées religieuses.*“

If, however, we go further back in Bonaparte's career, we alight also upon communications which bear directly upon our topic. Chateaubriand, quoting from an unpublished MS of Bonaparte's, written prior to the Italian campaign, gives³⁾ the following extract, for the authenticity of which I, of course, cannot vouch. „Ever alone, when in the midst of men, I gladly retire within myself to indulge myself in dreams, and to give way to the deep feeling of melancholy which oppresses me. In what direction does it point to-day? Towards the thought of death. If sixty years of my existence had passed away, I should *respect the prejudices* of my contemporaries, and wait patiently until nature had fulfilled its course; but since misfortune already begins to attend my steps, and nothing any longer affords me pleasure, *why* should I longer support the burden of days in which nothing seems to prosper with me?“ The chivalrous romanticist's disapproving sneers at this passage I will not quote.

Consequently, in his earlier days Napoleon had felt a strong temptation and inclination to suicide, nor do I imagine that he ever at any later period of his life entertained, on religious or moral grounds, an abhorrence of it, though we shall find him (vide p. 249 of §. 75) uttering, in his *military* capacity, a sort of contempt for it, when First Consul, and though Marchand assures us⁴⁾ that he in the last year of his life (August 10, 1820) dictated to him the

¹⁾ The Fall of Napoleon, vol. II, p. 367 of edit. 2. ²⁾ Ibid. vol. III, p. 179, and cf. pp. 303, 304. ³⁾ Foreign Reminiscences, p. 315. He refers to Sebastiani and Flaubert. ⁴⁾ Autobiography, vol. III, p. 223 of the English translation. ⁵⁾ Uebersicht der Kriege Cäsar's von Napoleon. Vom Kaiser auf St. Helena dictirt, niedergeschrieben von Marchand. Nebst mehreren bisher noch ungedruckten Fragmenten von Napoleon, 1836, pp. 233—235.

following elaborate anti-suicidal reflections or arguments which I will communicate in English, because of their length, though I have never been able to procure the French original, and have had to rely on the above anonymous German version of Marchand's work.

„Has man a right to kill himself? Yes, if his death does no injury to anybody and his life is only an evil for him.

When is life an evil unto man? If it afford to him nothing but sufferings and discomforts; but, since sufferings and discomforts change in every instant, there is no moment of life in which man would have the right to kill himself: such a moment would not have arrived until in the hour of his death itself, because he could not be really convinced until then that his life had been nothing but a woof of ills and pains.

There is nobody who has not more than once in his life, succumbing to the burden of inward sufferings, felt the desire to kill himself, and who would not a few days afterwards have repented of having done so, in consequence of the changes that had taken place in his mood and in external circumstances.

A person who had killed himself on Monday would have gladly been alive again on Saturday, and yet one kills one's self only once. Human life consists of pastness, presence and futurity; consequently, life must be for him an evil, if not for pastness, presence and futurity, yet for presence and futurity. But, if it be an evil only for the present, he sacrifices the future. The ills of one day do not give him a right to sacrifice his future life. Only that man would have a right to kill himself unto whom life were an evil and who — which thing is impossible — knew for certain that it would always be so, and that it would never change, neither through altered circumstances and relationships, nor through habitude and the lapse of time — which thing also is impossible.

A person who, succumbing to the burden of present sufferings, kills himself, commits a wrong against himself; he obeys from despair and weakness a momentary caprice and sacrifices to it his entire future existence.

The comparison with a mortified arm which is cut off for the purpose of saving the body, is poor: when the surgeon takes off the arm, he is convinced that the body could not but perish, if this were not done; this is not a matter of feeling at all, it is something real. If, on the contrary, the sufferings of life induce a

person to commit suicide, he not only puts an end to his sufferings, but also destroys the Future: nobody will ever repent of having had an arm amputated; he may and will almost always repent of having killed himself."

Also in one of his Elba MS productions, which I find communicated by Alvensleben,¹⁾ we read. „Since I did not give myself life, I will likewise not take it from myself, as long as it has something still to demand from me. It is cowardice and not courage, to sacrifice one's own life for the transient and vain things of this world of misery."

The reader must pardon my having made this longish digression by way of communicating all that I had ascertained concerning so renowned a man's sentiments on our topic. — Returning now for one instant to Preuss, I will merely state that, supposing M^{re} Junot's narrative to have been true — probably, it was not —, and supposing Napoleon's opinions on suicide at that period of his life to have been identical with Frederick's — manifestly, they were not —, there would still be no veritable analogy between the two cases; for, whether Napoleon did or did not survive the month of April anno 1814, France herself would, according to all human computation, have remained just as and where she was. Therefore, since his suicidal death could not have warded off from her any ill or secured to her any boon, neither patriotism nor self-devotion could have been presumed to have enacted a part in it as actuating motive. It would rather simply bear comparison with what we read in Nepos' life of the great Carthaginian Captain who, when his house was surrounded by the Roman soldiers, and no rescue was possible, strengthened himself by the remembrance of his great deeds, and, in order not to be dependent on the arbitrariness of strangers in his seventieth year, swallowed the poison which he had generally carried about him (*vita Hann. c. 12*). Indeed, to me individually the two great modern crowned warriors do not appear on any point whatsoever to admit of parallelism; and, when I think of Napoleon's conversations about God and Christianity with Talleyrand in later times and with the Mollahs already in the pyramid of Ceops, I cannot help assuming

¹⁾ Napoleon's hinterlassene Werke. Ein Supplement zu allen Gesähten Napoleon's, 1841, pp. 193, 194, of the essay: Betrachtungen über den Zustand von Europa.

that his occasional professions about his faith in the Divine was a species of solemn mockery and sentimental blasphemy, and preferring by much Frederick's leaving Providence and Religion entirely out of the question, and taking the whole responsibility of his resolve upon his own Reason and Impulse.

X. S. T. Coleridge († 1834).

Richly deserving of quotation, though, doubtless, already familiar to most of my readers, is the following duologue¹⁾ by which, as it was his peculiar gift, this most thoughtful and genial poet of ours clothes in very few, but all the more forcible, words the simple and serious thought that the suicide (we must, however, be permitted to intercalate „*generally* at least“) gives back to the original giver rather the mere rudera of the gift than the gift itself in its primal state.

The Suicide's Argument.

Ere the birth of my life, if I wished it or no,
No question was asked me — it could not be so!
If the life was the question, a thing sent try,
And to live on be Yes; what can No be? to die.

Nature's Answer.

Is't returned, as 'twas sent? Is't no worse for the wear?
Think first, what you are! Call to mind what you were!
I gave you innocence, I gave you hope,
Gave health, and genius, and ample scope.
Return you me guilt, lethargy, despair?
Make out the invent'ry; inspect, compare!
Then die, if you dare!

XI. Tiedge († 1841).

Rather laudable purpose than genuine fire produced at the commencement of this century a German didactic poem in six cantos, with frequent lyrical by-pieces, somewhat in the style of Young's Night Thoughts, but considerably shorter and, perhaps, more natural, but certainly incomparably inferior as to original thought, boldness of imagination, power of diction. I mean the „Urania“, in the last canto of which (superscribed „Liberty. Meeting again“) we are treated to the following narrative of suicide (it is, for aught I know to the contrary, devoid of historical foundation, and is not a little tediously

¹⁾Poems, p. 302.

spun out) which Tiedge evidently introduced in order to gain an opportunity of saying that even a voluntary death may or ought to be regarded as noble, if undertaken as the sole remaining means of escape from what degrades life. It shall, as a pretty favorable specimen of the sentimentalizing style of the entire production, stand here entire,¹⁾ and conclude this §.

Den edeln Jüngling Dion drängte
 Sein Büßriß hin zu einer Mißthat.
 „Und als sie schwarz vor seine Seele trat,
 Das Daseyn sich um ihn verengte,
 Kein Retter seine Hand ihm bot:
 Da blüht' es auf in ihm, ein Leben weg zu werfen,
 Das eine Schandthat zu besetzen droht.
 Es faust ein Sturm durch alle seine Nerven;
 Das Leben kämpft; er wählt, verwirft, und wählt den Tod.
 Doch will er nicht zu rasch hinaus ins Dunkel greifen;
 Nicht Stürme sollen ihn darnieder wehn;
 Drei Tage soll die That in ihrer Knospe reifen;
 Entschlossen will er untergehn.
 Die dritte Nacht erscheint, schwarz, wie die dunkle Pforte,
 Der sich der Jüngling kämpfend naht.
 Sein Tagebuch verrieth die letzten Worte,
 Womit er seinen finstern Weg betrat.
 Es rieseln schauernde Gefühle
 Kalt durch sein Herz. Er blickt in die Natur.
 „Noch ein Mahl“ — ruft er aus — „hebt aus dem Fluthgewühle
 Des Lebens sich mein Haupt, und weg ist meine Spur!
 Zum letzten Male dann, ihr schönen Himmelskloben,
 Zum letzten Male schaut zu euch hinaus mein Blick!
 Der Weltengeist, der liebend euch dort oben
 An seinem Herzen trägt, stößt mich auch nicht zurück.
 Nichts konnte von der Schmach mich retten,
 Nichts, als die Flucht ins sichere Grab.
 Noch schuldblos, werf ich meine Ketten,
 Natur, auf deinen Schooß hinab.
 Bedecke, Laub der wilden Kessel,
 Ein dunkles Leben, voller Schmach!
 Bedecke still die That, die eine harte Fessel —
 Verzeih, o Gott! — zu früh zerbrach!
 Ich zaudre noch? Schon ist die Mitternacht vorüber;
 Und immer zaudre' ich noch? — Der Tod — ein finstres Wort!
 Ach! siele noch einmal vom stillen Osten dort
 In meine Seel' ein Morgenblick herüber!

¹⁾ Werke, herausgegeben von Eberhard, B. I, pp. 172—175.

Vielleicht — vielleicht — — Sey stark, mein Geist! wir müssen fort! —
Den Kampf der Freiheit ehrt, müßt ihr die That auch tadeln!
Sagt, ob ihr ihn verdammen dürft,
Ihn, der im Drang, sein Leben zu entadeln,
Es rettend in den Arm des Todes wirft!"

§. 20. Lyrical poetry.

The last § became somewhat longer than I had anticipated; this present one shall be all the shorter. Indeed, perhaps some of the poems I mentioned there might just as well have found a place here: at least, one might experience some little difficulty in fixing with exactitude, in regard to such a topic as the one now before us, the boundary-line between what was intended to be didactic and what is really lyric. Upon the whole, the various species of poetry easily encroach one upon the other, and I individually should hesitate somewhat, were I to undertake to define unto myself, whether, for instance, the Elegy and the Ode appertain more to lyrical or to didactic poetry. Also the Epistle which is, by the by, one of the most prosaic forms of poetry, speaking quite in general, would seem to me occasionally to belong equally much to either of the two just-mentioned classes, just as the Ballad, for instance, may border on, or hover between, what is dramatic or epic and what is lyrical. But, of course, I say this off the book, not according to aesthetical laws and decrees.

The selection or limitation of material in this § causes me some little trouble. Most lyric poets from Pindar¹⁾ to Alfred Tennyson²⁾ have touched upon our subject, albeit only briefly and incidentally, in a tone of sympathy or warning, laudation or rebuke. We must, however, not specify the epithets which one or the other of them has in passing bestowed on self-slaughter or on the slayer of himself; for there would be no end to such a minutious process, and exceedingly little gain therefrom, either for our historical purpose or in a purely ethical point of view. Only when and where the

¹⁾ Viz. in his allusions to Ajax Telamonius (N. VII, 39 — 44., and VIII, 85 — 44). Cf. also Isth. III and IV, 90 — 100. This singer, sublime equally through his manliness and his reverence, sympathized deeply with the valiant and wronged warrior, and conceives and represents his suicide as a deliberate act of just wrath. ²⁾ More especially in his profound poem „The two Voices.“

lyric poet has appeared to desire and design to impress upon his reader a more or less lively interest in the subject, and thus, as it were, to make him a confidant of his own unmistakable opinions or feelings in reference to it, can we, for our specific aim, care to acquaint ourselves with his pertinent lines. Some few poems of this description shall, then, here be noticed: others will, perhaps, come in for casual mention elsewhere in our Treatise, if they may be turned to any welcome account. I'll again proceed chronologically, but with tremendous gaps; or rather: ignoring entirely the ancient classical world, and even the mediaeval and immediately following times of Christendom, I shall at once make choice of three or four comparatively recent, or still living, lyric poets to whose views and utterances some measure of literary, whether historical or psychological, interest may be said to attach.

I. Thomas Warton († 1790).

This gentleman, who was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Poet Laureate, and possessor of sundry good clerical livings, wrote an ode „the suicide“, of which an anonymous biographer says ¹⁾ „it is characterized by bold personification, picturesque description, and pathetic sentiment.“ Whether, however, it really deserve such trebly epithetic praise, I incline to doubt: Warton was not a poet in the genuine sense of the term, I presume, but simply, as before said, a Professor of Poetry and a Poet Laureate in the style and fashion of those days; elaborate and grandiloquent phraseology had often to do the work of spontaneous inspiration and deep feeling. As a meritorious and an industrious commentator on Spenser and Milton, he could not but be familiar with our theme, and as an Anglican Parson and an Oxford Professor, he could not but, if he treated it at all, let a *divine voice* come in as *Deus ex machina* to condemn self-slaughter unconditionally.

In this same Ode, then, we have a description of the solitary and unhallowed grave of some „slayer of himself“ on some uninviting way-side, of the gloomy day on which, and the frantic manner in which, the deed was done, of the inward and outward sufferings of various kinds which preceded it, so that the poet would fain kindly sympathize with, and sing genially and justifyingly of, the youth that was gone; but, suddenly a „cherub-voice“ interferes, and

¹⁾ Vide Cooke's edit. of Thomas Warton's Poems, Preface, p. XXVI.

indites to him, the poet, four verses, the second and the last of which run thus.

„Just heaven, man's fortitude to prove,
Permits through life at large to rove
The tribes of hell-born woe:
Yet the same power that wisely sends
Life's fiercest ills, indulgent lends
Religion's golden shield to break the embattled foe.“

„Vain man! 'tis Heaven's prerogative
To take, what first it deign'd to give,
Thy tributary breath:
In awful expectation plac'd,
Await thy doom, nor impious haste
To pluck from God's right hand his instruments of death.“

II. Lord Byron († 1824).

„Is it yet some imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince — or live a slave —
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!“
„So abject — yet alive!“
„And can he thus survive?“
„If thou hadst died as honour dies“ — — —

This, and more of a similar kind,¹⁾ is the expression of our noble poet's anger against Napoleon for surviving the battle of Waterloo, for not having slain himself after its loss, instead of abdicating, allowing himself to be transported, etc. Of course, the above quotations do not admit of any other interpretation. Indeed, we gather from another source²⁾ that they express his deliberate sentiments. „Nathan, you seem anxious to support the credit of a great man, but I must repeat, that Napoleon would have ranked higher in future history, had he even like your venerable ancestor Saul, on Mount Gilboa, or like a second Cato, fallen on his own sword, and finished his mortal career at Waterloo.“ His Lordship here gave me a significant look as if reading my abhorrence of anything like self-destruction, and said: „bear in mind, Nathan, that I do not by this remark wish by any means to become the patron of suicide.“

¹⁾ Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte. ²⁾ Nathan's Fugitive Pieces and Reminiscences of Lord Byron, 1829, p. 40.

Really not? Let us see.

It is true, he in one poem¹⁾ speaks of suicide as „the self-accorded grave of ancient fool and modern knave“, and in another²⁾ designates it „a selfish death“; but — —

„And I at times have found the struggle hard
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay.“

Thus in a third poem,³⁾ composed anno 1816. Descending, however, to his prose, we there find among other things the following passages.⁴⁾ „I am ennuyé beyond my usual tense of that yawning verb, which I am always conjugating; and I don't find that society much mends the matter. I am too lazy to shoot myself — and it would annoy Augusta (his step-sister) and perhaps; but it would be a good thing for George (his heir) on the other side, and no bad one for me; but I won't be tempted.“ — Do you think I would not have shot myself last year (i. e. 1816), had I not luckily recollected that Mrs. C..... would have been delighted; — besides the agreeable „Lunacy“ of the „Crown's Quest“, and the regrets of two or three or half a dozen?“ — „I ought to blow my brains out (i. e. in case the Countess Guiccioli should die), and I hope that I should.“ — When he once had had some terrible dreams, he threatened to try „all sleep“, if he should be again troubled in a similar manner. — „Mme. de Staël has published an Essay against suicide, which, I presume, will make somebody shoot himself.“⁵⁾

Aye, if we look rightly and closely at the opposition and rebellion, the want of love and faith in both his poetry and his life, suicide would seem to be almost the only outlet opened by the former and reserved for the latter. That the influence, direct or indirect, of his poetry has really led many to self-destruction, I doubt not; and I incline to believe that, had life been granted to him much longer, and had no new circumstance presented itself to feed his vanity or gratify his longing for excitement, some later writer would have had to turn against him that same reproach which he

¹⁾ The Giaour. ²⁾ The Prisoner of Chillon. Cf. also Don Juan, Canto IX, v. 16. ³⁾ To Augusta. ⁴⁾ Vide Moore's notices of the life of Lord Byron, vol. II, pp. 298, 218, IV, pp. 2, 171; Note to Don Juan, IV, 34; and cf. in Moore's notices also IV, 34, V, 247. ⁵⁾ By the by, this wanton witticism or frivolous sneer is not new. Lichtenberg (sämmtl. Werke, B. II, p. 287) informs us that somebody said on Less's anti-suicidal dissertation on suicide: „er wüßte nicht, seitdem er das Büchleichen gelesen hätte, käme ihn zumessen der Stiel an, sich selbst zu ermorben.“

so ungenerously visited upon his fellow-peer, Castlereagh. His maternal grandfather and other relatives of his had ended suicidally, and his own wife was told (vide note to Don Juan, I, 25) that he would, probably, destroy himself. — Let us remember that he says in his *Euthanasia*:

„Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be“ —

nor may we forget that his own last words were those which he had placed on the lips of his *suicide-contemplating Manfred*, who was in many respects an autobiographic sketch of the poet himself; the words: „'tis not so difficult to die.“

III. Nicolaus Lenau († 1850).

Finally, a brief and simple, but thoughtful and tender-hearted effusion¹⁾ from a man who, though Hungarian by birth and name, was by education and temperament a German, and, having written solely in German under the above assumed German name, has deservedly taken rank among the most gifted and popular of the lyrical minstrels of modern Germany. We might call him „il Penseroso“ in the Miltonic sense; for Death, Melancholy, Solitude, Madness are the favorite themes of his two volumes of lyrics; and alas! he himself died — insane. Thence, his deep sympathy with the tried, the unhappy, the succumbing.

Schettert unsre Brust an Klippen,
Dingeschellt von Sturmeswuth;
Trinkt mit aufgerissnen Lippen
Unsre Wunde Schmerzensfluth;

Schöpft das Herz dann hastig bange
Aus der Brust den Thränenguß,
Weil es sonst vom Wellendränge
Ueberströmt versinken muß;

Dann wird auch der Sturm beschworen,
Helle wird die Finsterniß,
Es vertünch'n milde Horen
An der Brust den Wundentriß.

¹⁾ Gedichte, Aufl. 12, 1851, Band I, pp. 210, 211. Der Selbstmord. Cf. also Band II, pp. 304—306. Am Sarge eines Schwermüthigen, der sich selbst den Tod gegeben.

Aber ist das Herz ein zages,
Wenn die Brust die Woge trinkt,
Starrt es ob des Klippenschlages
Störrisch, müßig — und versinkt.

Ist's ein wildes, ungezäumtes,
Wird es im Tumulte scheu,
Lobestrunken glüht und schäumt es,
Und zertrümmert sein Gebäu.

Wenn dann auch der Himmel heiter
Und mit lindem Hauche weht,
Sanft der Strom hinwiegt die Schetter;
Für die Todten ist's zu spät.

Doch ihr Schifflein, hört, ihr andern!
Seid ihr auch dem Sturm entwischt,
Ruhig mögt ihr weiter wandern,
Aber nicht gehöhnt, gezischt:

„Wie der Rachen ward zertrümmert!
Wie das Herz im Strom ersoff!
Warst wohl auch zu leicht gezimmert!
Warst wohl auch aus schlechtem Stoff!“

Hütet euch, ihr andern, hütet!
Denkt an eurer Fahrten Rest;
Denn die Nacht der Zukunft brütet
Manchen Sturm im dunkeln Nest.

IV. Victor Hugo.

There was a time, when a most winsome tale was glowingly told about the semi-southern origin, the wondrously precocious gifts, the pious Vendée education, and the early enthusiastic attachment of the man whose later and latest actions and writings afford but too much matter for a very different tale. Almost swaddled and cradled in and into poesy, he subsequently apostatized from his first nurse and love, and revelled in theatricals and speculated in politics, and became first ignobly ennobled, and then illegally exiled, so that he now dwells lonesomely in the marine cottage on one of our Channel Islands and writes powerful, but unavailing, pamphlets against Queen Victoria's imperial ally. Nevertheless, I for one would scarcely condemn him for his „Napoléon le petit“, which I have read, and other similar productions which I have not read. He is, at least, still a man in comparison with the many of his compatriots

who have bowed their knee in mean and selfish worship before the success of perjury and a sceptre won by violence; and he is still a man in comparison with the writers of some of the Times' Leaders in the year 1855, when the French Emperor was in London!

I am not unacquainted with this romanticist-chief's dramas, novels, and prose writings of various sorts; indeed I may say that I have carefully read almost all of them, very unedifying though some of them be. Therefore, I feel justified in pronouncing a verdict upon them as far as their collective spirit has a bearing upon our theme; and I boldly affirm that, whether Victor Hugo himself willed it to be so or not, the Gospel he has for many a year preached in and to modern France had a suicidal canker-worm gnawing at its core, and that many have foolishly believed in the said pseudo-gospel, and that many have fallen victims to their feverish faith. This, however, only by the way; for I have here to deal only with Hugo as lyrical poet, and I was somewhat astonished to find him in this capacity deploring and quasi condemning suicide.¹⁾

After having described the self-sought end of a vain, capricious, heartless, foolish young man whose worthless character and worse than useless life he depicts with most powerful colors, and after having uttered as his own verdict that such a one even in his self-inflicted death is not a fit object for compassion or complaint, but rather only for contemptuous silence and quick oblivion, and that only his parents, the victims of his seductive arts, his family-name, his friends and dependents, and — his dog are deserving of pity, our poet proceeds to make some general remarks on suicide at the period of his composition, more especially in Paris, and does not fail to adduce sundry note-worthy examples by way of contrast with the case he had previously delineated. The reflections which he introduces into this after-piece are earnest and significant, so that I would fain give them a place here. Not that Victor Hugo has attempted to solve the problem at issue. He rather leaves notes of interrogation, with that extreme force and partial unclearness which characterize very many of his lyrical effusions, as the main form of speech. Mark, however, that he seems to feel that, perhaps, the piety and faith of more ancient christian times might be more salutary and fruitful than the throes and chymical dissolve-

¹⁾ Chants du crépuscule, chant XIII, appendix dated Sept. 1835.

ments of the 19th century. — Yet, on re-perusal of the said Appendix, only the *concluding twenty and odd lines* of which I had intended to insert here, because in them alone we were more immediately interested, I have remained under the impression that, unless the preceding thirty or forty lines were also transcribed, our extract might prove somewhat unsatisfactory and unintelligible to the reader; and he, I may venture to surmise, will easily be able to gain access to the collective lyrical poems of this living writer, and, if he care at all for the genuinely poetical expression of conflicting thoughts and agitated feelings, thank me for having pointed out to him verses on our topic which otherwise might easily have escaped his notice.

§. 21. The Novel.

The Novel, as originally and essentially of the nature and character of Poetry, quite legitimately occupies a place within the territory of Belles Lettres; and we therefore need not scruple to devote to it the final § in our present last Introductory Chapter.

What in ancient days and among ancient peoples the Epos was, the Novel may be said to have become in modern times and among modern nations; and even its exclusively prosaic form does not forbid rhythm, if not rhyme, occasionally finding a way, appropriately and spontaneously, into some of the most elevated and pathetic passages, as might easily be shown, if need were. Epic poems, true and great ones, from the Homeric Rhapsodies to the Lay of the Nibelungen, grew not only out of the existence of prominent national heroes in by-gone ages, but also out of such sort and measure of „hero-worship“ as admitted of the employment of supernatural machinery for the glorification of those heroes, and they consequently more or less required and presupposed popular faith in that machinery (cf. §. 17). We Moderns, however, have waxed, in the course of ages, weary of the worship of human heroes, our faculties for worship having been called to, and absorbed into, a higher object; Life in general, the life of the *People* and of the *Present*, has somewhat abstracted our attention from individual personalities of past generations, and, thus dimming the lustre of the actions of the few, demanded and necessitated a Popular literature which, resting upon a broader basis and moving in a wider sphere, should interest

and instruct the Multitude. And such semi-fictional, or wholly fictitious, species of prose-poetry is the Novel. What in the genuine ancient Epos, classical or romantic, the mythic traditions and imaginative colorings of the Past were, the concentration and intensification of the real life of the Present are in the genuine modern Novel. Both, Epos and Novel, are pictures, nay, portraits, but more or less idealized, or deepened, into an unusual measure of glory, or of gloom.

The Novel, *strictly so called*, is consequently a comparatively modern vehicle of literary utterance; at least, as regards what we have to communicate specifically in connexion with our immediate topic, we should be justified in proceeding at once to the modern Novel. Nevertheless, previously a few brief words in passing on what classical antiquity at its latest period and the romantic middle ages have bequeathed to us as a sort of Novels in the shape of pastoral tales or chivalrous stories.

From the Greeks we have e. g. Heliodor's Theagenes and Charikleia, Chariton's (?) Chätreas and Kallirhoe, Longus' Daphnis and Chloe; from the Romans Petronius' Satyricon and Apulejus' Metamorphoseon. That suicide meditated and menaced, if not accomplished, occurs in some of these, ¹⁾ is pretty natural to suppose; but ought specially doctrinal is not, as far as I can recollect, conveyed except in a somewhat remarkable passage of Heliodor's production, where ²⁾ Charikles the priest of the Pythian oracle at Delphi, whilst recounting his heavy domestic bereavements, says: „I did not bear the God-sent misfortune; yet I did not depart from life, considering it wrong to do so, according to the principles of the Theologians, but departed out of my native land, and fled the devastation of my house.“ This passage, however, must await its proper illustration from what will come before us in the first chapter of the next Section, unless the Aethiopica be, as some have surmised, the production of a *christian*, not of a pagan, writer.

As to the chivalresque „*fabliaux*“ and „*romances*“ of the Middle Ages, I have read too few of them to be able to state with positiveness what part suicide either narratively or doctrinally is made to enact in them. Upon the whole, however, I cannot but feel disposed to assume that love-sick dames, dishonor-fearing knights etc. are

¹⁾ E. g. in Chariton lib. V, c. 10, VII, c. 1, VI, c. 6; Longus lib. II, c. 39; Petron. pp. 73, 103, 142; Apulej. libb. IV and VIII. ²⁾ Aethiopica, lib. II, c. 29.

therein pretty frequently represented as being anything but loath to commit suicide, that neither they themselves nor their relations and friends are made to ponder for a single moment the sinfulness of the act, and that the Trouvères, Troubadours, Fabulistes do not seem to have been inclined to attach much importance to the ecclesiastical anathemas or civil ignominies which at those periods followed in the train of self-despatchment. Were I to task my memory patiently, or to read again or for the first time some few of the leading productions under mention, I might, perhaps, pretty quickly be enabled to supply sundry literary notices in proof and elucidation of what I have, on the strength of a mere vague general impression, just now ventured to assert. But the point to be established would scarcely be worth the trouble incurred. Wherefore I will prefer adducing instead the only instance that has become known to me of a sort of anti-suicidal voice preaching in this mediaeval novellistic desert. I allude to a sample which Immanuel Bekker has given from a Parisian MS of the Northern French epopee „le livre des quatre fils Aymon“, in which we read¹⁾ how, when the King Ivo of Gascogne is about to hang himself, his chamberlain falls on his knees before him, and in the most imploring manner endeavors to dissuade him, advising him to turn hermit along with himself, and how the King thereupon weeps, declares him to be in the right, and follows his counsel.

„sire roy débonnaire, or entendés a my.
on treufve en l'escriture, que li saint benay
ont faite et ordonnee, si com dieu l'estably,
on treufve que Judas, qui le fils dieu vendy,
quant vit qu'il ot mal fait, en desespoir chay,
tellement com ie voy drois ey le corps de ty.
on treufve en l'escriture que s'il eust mercy
prier à dieu de gloire, qu'il baissa et trahy,
il eust eu pardon, et pour ce y ailly
qu'il s'en desespera: on le dit bien ausy.
se perdi corps et ame, pour certain vous le dy.
roy, ne ressemblés mie Judas, et ie t'en prie.“

Advancing, then, to the post-reformatorial times, we will at once step into the second half of the 18th century, since no really classical and influential novel prior to that period exists, as far as I am aware, in which suicide is so introduced and discussed as to become

¹⁾ Der Roman von Fierabras, Brevenotiz, 1829, p. VII, vv. 578—589.

not only of preponderating interest in the plot, but likewise as to be a question of palpable doctrinal importance to the author himself, so that we may pretty safely say of certain tenets and sentiments therein put forth: lo! this is a piece of inward autobiography, a confession of ethical faith, the author's own veritable conviction and deliberate opinion!

I. Rousseau's *la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760).

Though, doubtless, Rousseau meant this celebrated production of his to exhibit a somewhat complete system of his peculiar philosophy, and not to be by any means a mere entertaining or pathetic love-story, we must for our present purpose limit ourselves to the amatory tale therein contained, since it forms the Ariadne-thread which will conduct us to that portion upon which our attention has to concentrate itself.

Saint-Preux, a young man of humble birth and without means — I recount thus minutely, because comparatively few persons, if I mistake not, now-a-days have the patience to peruse this bulky work —, is tutor to a young lady of noble rank, Julie d'Etange. They become enamoured of each other, and transgress the bounds of virtuous prudence. Julie's father, however, having managed to induce Saint-Preux to absent himself, forces her to give him up, and to bestow her hand upon a somewhat elderly friend of his own, M. de Wolmar, a kind and sensible man, better suited for her than Saint-Preux in point of family and fortune. In this wedded union Julie feels herself calmly happy, and has strength of mind and virtuous principle enough left to break off forthwith, and apparently for ever, all correspondence with the then distant Saint-Preux. But he, taken by surprise and cast into the deepest despair, thereupon resolves to destroy himself, and communicates this intention to his most confidential friend and noble-minded benefactor, Lord Edouard Bomston.¹⁾

From the contents of his lengthy and elaborate epistle²⁾ it would appear that Saint-Preux had already previously discussed this design with his benevolent English patron; and, indeed, in earlier portions of our Novel he has more than once hinted at suicide.³⁾ On later occasions we shall revert to sundry items of this renowned pro-suici-

¹⁾ By the by, a name neither more euphonious nor more *vernacular* than the infelicitous and un-English „Dudding“ which Rousseau gave himself at Montpellier, when he wished to pass himself off as an Englishman. Vide his *Confessions*, liv. VI. ²⁾ Partie III, lettre 21. ³⁾ E. g. Partie I, lettres 3 and 26.

dal epistle, and will, therefore, content ourselves for the present with quoting what we take to be the main argumentative sentence in the letter. „Chercher son bien et fuir son mal en ce qui n'offense point autrui, c'est le droit de la nature. Quand notre vie est un mal pour nous et n'est un bien pour personne, il est donc permis de s'en délivrer. S'il y a dans le monde une maxime évidente et certaine, je pense que c'est celle-là; et si l'on venoit à bout de la renverser, il n'y a point d'action humaine dont on ne pût faire un crime.“ The above passage stands near the beginning of his letter, and at the conclusion of the said letter Saint-Preux even endeavors to persuade his friend to kill himself too. — But Milord Bomston, far from showing himself willing to do so, writes an epistle in refutation of the reasonings put forth by his correspondent.¹⁾ In it he says of the said reasonings that they are „un misérable et perpétuel sophisme, qui dans l'égarement de la raison marque celui de ton coeur, et que je ne daignerois pas même relever si je n'avois pitié de ton délire.“ Suchlike phrases, however, are all the world over, be the subject in debate what it may, rather *pathological* than philosophical; for, when people cannot argue themselves into victory, they endeavor to abuse, strive to scoff at, and pretend to pity, their antagonist. Nevertheless, he himself admits the justifiableness of suicide in cases of incurable and paralyzing physical sufferings. „Quoi qu'il en soit; puisque la plupart de nos maux physiques ne font qu'augmenter sans cesse, de violentes douleurs du corps quand elles sont incurables peuvent autoriser un homme à disposer de lui: car toutes ses facultés étant aliénées par la douleur, et le mal étant sans remède, il n'a plus l'usage ni de sa volonté ni de sa raison; il cesse d'être homme ayant de mourir, et ne fait en s'ôtant la vie qu'achever de quitter un corps qui l'embarrasse et où son ame n'est déjà plus.“ And of Cato he speaks with especial reference to his suicide thus. „A ce nom saint et auguste, tout ami de la vertu doit mettre le front dans la poussière et honorer en silence la mémoire du plus grand des hommes.“ He concludes with the following apostrophe which, though often made use of before, and often employed in one form or the other since, Rousseau's vigorous mind and ardent feelings have enabled him to express freshly and origi-

¹⁾ Partie III, lettre 22. The quotations I shall make are on pp. 280, 283, 286, 288.

nally. „S'il te reste au fond du coeur le moindre sentiment de vertu, viens, que je t'apprenne à aimer la vie. Chaque fois que tu seras tenté d'en sortir, dis en toi-même: Que je fasse encore une bonne action avant que de mourir. Puis va chercher quelque indigent à secourir, quelque infortuné à consoler, quelque opprimé à défendre.“ (I will only annotate that in what he here himself says a weighty objection might, *perhaps*, be found to his own defence of Cato who, by living on, could, not to speak of exhibiting greatness of soul in untoward circumstances, have haply performed much or little towards lessening the burden of the lot of many of his compatriots).

Touching the respective merits of the two epistles before us, Saint-Preux's has seemed to me the superior one, not because it is the by far lengthier and more elaborate one, but because it manifests more strength of thought and acuteness of argument, and because there waves around it an atmosphere of clearer, breezier, more genial eloquence. Saint-Preux maintains „j'ai long-temps médité sur ce grave sujet“, and we cannot but believe him; he affirms „j'adore l'Etre éternel“, and we do not incline to disbelieve him.

Yet, most *German* and *English* critics would appear to have formed the *very opposite* estimate of their relative literary value, and, consequently, also of Rousseau's own design in penning them. The anonymous author of a little work on Goethe's Werther¹⁾ apparently regarded Mylord Edward's letter as an irrefutable argumentation against suicide. Stäudlin (p. 258 of the work quoted in the Preface) says expressly: „Des Engländers Antwort ist tröstlicher und origineller, als der andre Brief.“ The anonymous editor (vide Sect. V) of Hume's Essay in defence of suicide appends both letters as „very masterly“ productions to his own *anti-suicidal* tract, from which circumstance we must, doubtless, infer that he considered Bomston's epistle the more powerful and convincing one of the two. Moore (vol. II, p. 88 of the work quoted in the Preface) takes the same view of them, and adds „the reply is supposed to contain Rousseau's own sentiments on the subject“, i. e. to be, as a matter of course, triumphant, unless we are absurdly to imagine an author wilfully and wantonly letting a fictitious creation of his own brain battle down his, the author's, own veriest and sincerest convictions.

According to these testimonies, then, Jean Jacques would, by

¹⁾ Gespräche über die Leiden des jungen Werthers, 1775, p. 66 ff.

virtue of these very epistles, be entitled to no mean post in the phalanx of the combatants against suicide.

Turning, however, to *French* critics, among them a different opinion is prevalent; ¹⁾ but I will limit myself to M^{me} de Staël's verdict, because she had evidently pondered the subject with no small degree of interest, and because, though she at a later period herself (vide Sect. V) wrote elaborately both for and against suicide, she never found reason (vide p. 336 of her réflexions sur le suicide, where she argues against Saint-Preux's letter as J. J. Rousseau's own dicta) to modify the opinion she had expressed in her youthful, unsophisticated, searching little work on all the writings, as well as on the character, of the Genevese citizen. ²⁾ „Quelle belle lettre pour et contre le suicide! quel puissant argument de métaphysique et de pensée! Celle qui condamne le suicide est *inférieure* à celle qui le justifie, soit que l'horreur naturelle et l'instinct de la conscience parlent plus éloquemment contre le suicide que le raisonnement même; soit que Rousseau se sentît né pour être malheureux, et craignît de s'ôter sa dernière ressource en se persuadant lui-même.“ And, as I ween, our gifted young authoress correctly discriminated philologically and divined psychologically in this matter, even if we extend our view beyond the mere letters before us. If the question of suicide be tossed to and fro as a topic of subtle and sophistic reasoning *only*, wit and understanding *as such* might easily discover and demonstrate the vantage-ground to lie on the pro-suicidal terrain, a remark which would apply equally to sundry other topics of ethico-religious enquiry and interest. To *women* more especially, perhaps, this may appear to be the case. There was general, everlasting signficancy in the old Hebrew sage's letting Eve lose and be lost in the dispute, when she would fain ascertain from the Serpent, i. e. the principle of subtle, sophistic understanding and wit, the reason *why* an apparently hard and arbitrary divine commandment had been

¹⁾ Thus, for instance, M. Merian in his essay: „Sur la crainte de la mort. Sur le mépris de la mort. Sur le suicide“, as published in the Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des sciences et belles-lettres de Berlin, année 1763, pp. 355—406, says on p. 378: „Nous avons, dans un ouvrage moderne, un morceau qu' Hégésias ne désavoueroit pas, et dont la lecture, faite dans un accès d'hypocondrie, ou par des hommes malheureux, ne seroit guères moins pernicieuse que le furent ses harangues. On y voit jusqu'à quel point la cause du Suicide peut être embellie par les prestiges de l'art Oratoire.“ He is alluding to Saint-Preux's epistle. ²⁾ Lettres sur les écrits et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau, 1788, Oeuvres complètes, T. I, p. 38.

given. But, to keep to our topic, what an anonymous English authoress in an otherwise very silly little recent religious work lets a mother, when dissuading her son from self-destruction, write to him, is characteristic and, except the last part, sensible. ¹⁾ „Could I *reason* as I *feel* on this subject, with what a torrent of argument would I overwhelm you. Yet reason disdains the theme; it is too absurdly wrong, too wantonly wicked, to be entitled to examination.“

We will, however, now briefly examine also into what Moore assumes, without any further proof, to have been Rousseau's *anti-suicidal* „own sentiments.“ Methinks, his „own sentiments“ were rather proveably *the opposite*.

In the Preface to la nouvelle Héloïse and in the mightily long Dialogue affixed to that Preface, Rousseau professes to be only the editor, as it were, of this Novel; but, lest such a foolish fiction should be mistaken for a cowardly evasion (whilst penning these last two words, I cannot help hinting that Mr. Froude seemed to me to *lower himself* considerably, when he in certain published letters disavowed in a fashion the identity of his own opinions with those put forward in his brilliant, but inconsistent, little work „the Nemesis of Faith“), he avows himself fully responsible for all the sentiments and principles broached in the Novel. Additionally, however, he sometimes appends notes to the text for the purpose of expressing his own views in a more direct and distinct manner in his own name, not under the mask of the personages of the Novel itself. Such a note, then, is affixed likewise to lettre 21. A part of it I have already quoted in §. 13, and another part of it I shall have to quote in Section V; here, therefore, I will merely state that its palpable purport is to *vindicate* suicide; or, can the following few lines of it be differently understood? „Défions-nous des préjugés de siècle et de nation. Quand ce n'est pas la mode de se tuer, on n'imagine que des enragés qui se tuent; tous les actes de courage sont autant de chimères pour les âmes foibles; chacun ne juge des autres que par soi.“ Nor may it be altogether irrelevant to state that Saint-Preux himself on a later occasion (Partie V, lettre 3) avows that only his personal consideration or affection for Bomston, not Bomston's arguments, had induced him to *live on*.

But, more than this. The various critics above-mentioned would

¹⁾ Life for Life, or, the Law written in the Human Heart, p. 109.

appear either not to have known or not to have remembered a certain passage in one of Rousseau's Essays.¹⁾ Writing anno 1756 to Voltaire a sort of controversial remonstrance against Voltaire's already in §. 4 cited Poeme sur le desastre de Lisbonne, Rousseau, evidently fancying that some passage in the said Poem contained a more or less explicit defence of man's right to destroy himself, utters in his own proper person the following distinct *pro-suicidal* opinion. „C'est souvent l'abus que nous faisons de la vie qui nous la rend à charge, et j'ai bien moins bonne opinion de ceux qui sont fâchés d'avoir vécu, que de celui qui peut dire avec Caton: Nec me vixisse poenitet, quoniam ita vixi, ut frustra me natum non existimem.“ Cela n'empêche pas que le sage ne puisse *quelquefois déloger volontairement*, sans murmure et sans désespoir, *quand la nature ou la fortune lui portent bien distinctement l'ordre de mourir*“ (or, according to another reading, du départ).

And, finally, since M^{me} de Staël has above in passing alluded to the manner of Rousseau's own death, we will also glance at it, as it may contribute its quotum to a commentary on the words I have just brought forward. For, whatever else Rousseau may not have been, — and the account against him is a pretty heavy one, though scarcely so heavy, perhaps, as certain would-be very religious writers, who have not reflected sufficiently on the peculiarities of his character and situation, have made out —, he was certainly a man of convictions and verity unto himself, a man in whom there was consistency between utterance and action — no mean merit at any time, and more especially in our own canting days.

„He died suddenly; but whether by his own hand or not, is still a litigated question.“ Thus incidentally an anonymous English writer, anything but favorable to him, as recently as 1836.²⁾ M^{me} de Staël, on the contrary, regards — vide p. 96 ff. of the above little work — his death as incontestably suicidal, gives excellent authority, as it seems to me, for her opinion, and assigns his discovery of the faithlessness of his wife as the proximate reason. Indeed, on the one hand, nobody acquainted with the details of Rousseau's career can, I think, experience much difficulty in divining why he should have wished and willed to quit life exactly at the said period (1778,

¹⁾ Epître à Voltaire, Oeuvres complètes de Jean J. Rousseau, T. XXV, p. 109 ff. ²⁾ Quarterly Review, vol. LVI, p. 72.

July 2), after misanthropy had driven him out of Paris, and poverty had compelled him to seek an asylum in a small cottage at Ermenonville on the estate of the Marquess of Girardin, on whose bounty he had thrown himself; and, on the other hand, every circumstance connected with that same sudden death of his, as related by his own wife and believed by persons who revered his memory, points to a rapidly fatal poison which he had taken, and of which he felt certain that it would produce death almost instantaneously. It is true ¹⁾ that two *village-surgeons* opened the corpse, and that their „visum et repertum“ was to the effect that our philosopher's death had been caused by „apoplexie séreuse“; but, how easily may not such a verdict have originated either in their own ignorance of medical science, or in the Marquess de Girardin's friendly interference and anxiety for the honor of Rousseau's memory? — I, therefore, for one applaud Weckbrin's not hesitating to take for granted ²⁾ that Jean Jacques really died by his own hand, and to let his Spirit re-appear on earth for the purpose of arguing and declaiming in defence of suicide, and against the law's and the magistracy's visiting a suicide with penal inflictions.

II. Goethe's *Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774).

There, probably, never existed a novel about which, exactly in reference to our theme, more has been written than the tiny volume we are now about to look into. Nor more nonsense either; and, as regards our fellow-countrymen, up to the present day they not infrequently expose themselves at Wetzlar to much ridicule and imposition, ³⁾ when ignorantly and credulously in quest of gossip and relics concerning young Werther whom they assume to be meant in sober earnest for young Jerusalem. Indeed, nothing absolutely satisfactory could be ascertained about the partly fictitious and partly historical elements of this Novel, and about the relative bearings of Jerusalem's and Goethe's adventures and characters upon the plot, until, last year, the posthumous work of Kestner was published. ⁴⁾ Here, then, the leading points, as far as they can interest the English reader and elucidate our immediate enquiry.

¹⁾ Vide the essay *Rousseau's Ende*, 1785, in das *graue Ungeheuer*, B. VIII, pp. 190—209. ²⁾ Ibid. B. III, pp. 28—54 in the essay *der Geist der deutschen Criminalgesetze und der Geist Rousseau's in den Gefilden Elysiums*. ³⁾ Vide e. g. Murray's *Handbook for Northern Germany*, p. 513 of edit. 7. ⁴⁾ *Goethe und Werther*, von A. Kestner, 2. Aufl. 1855. Here cf. especially pp. 87—100, also 101—102, and the entire *Einführung*, p. 1 ff.

Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem, the son of the celebrated preacher and writer J. F. W. Jerusalem, of Brunswick, was attached at Wetzlar to the Brunswick embassy. His entire position, however, in this post and town proved little to his taste. The haute volée received him with coolness, and with the Brunswick ambassador himself he was at issue. Into the bargain, he became enamoured of the wife of a certain Secretary whose name is not given: the lady herself was anything but disposed to reciprocate his passionate affection, or to favor his declared suit, and her husband, who was of an extremely jealous disposition, at last, at his wife's own urgent request, forbade him to visit at their house any more. Almost immediately after he had received this admonitory and prohibitory communication, Jerusalem shot himself (Oct. 30, 1772). He had always been of a very reserved turn, was fond of solitary walks, and had more than once both in written essays and oral discussions strenuously vindicated suicide, although he was firmly convinced of the soul's immortality. Weary of the world, he expected to reach Heaven by dispatching himself. Previously, he had destroyed all his written documents, and requested the forgiveness of his parents in a letter he addressed to them. The brace of pistols with one of which he destroyed himself he had borrowed from Kestner himself on a false pretext. Though he had shot himself at midnight, life did not become quite extinct until the following noon. On the night of the same day at a quarter to twelve he was buried in the ordinary churchyard: journeymen barbers carried the coffin; some few other persons with lanterns accompanied it; a crucifix was carried in advance, but no clergyman attended.

All this happened, when Goethe himself was no longer in Wetzlar which town he had quitted, suddenly and for ever, Sept. 11, 1772. What he knew about the matter was communicated to him by Kestner in the same year at his own request; nor had he ever been to any mentionable extent personally intimate with Jerusalem.

Every reader of our poet's world-renowned autobiography, called „*Wahrheit und Dichtung*“, the facts of which are the *Truth*, and only the coloring and connecting of which constitute the *Fiction*, is aware of his numerous youthful attachments; indeed, wheresoever he abode, some affair of the heart, in which, however, as it seems to me, the genuine, full *heart* was alas! sadly too little concerned, was sure to spring up: in Frankfurt Gretchen, in Leipzig Annette, in

Worms Charitas Meixner, and, most mournful of all, in Sesenheim Friederike Brion. It is, therefore, in no wise to be wondered at that, when in the year 1772 Goethe's professional pursuits conducted him to Wetzlar, a Charlotte Buff should have succeeded to the many who had been already loved, trifled with, forsaken, and forgotten. This same Charlotte (the Lotte of our Novel) was, however, at that time already engaged to the above mentioned M. Kestner, an amiable and intelligent young man, whom she subsequently also married, and with whom she was extremely happy. Therefore, if Goethe meant any real personage by his Albert in the Novel, Kestner must have been intended; but Kestner was considerably unlike, essentially superior to, the said portraiture, so that we here too find ourselves on the ground of semi-fiction.

Every writer on Goethe¹⁾ lays, and very justly according to Goethe's own communications, stress upon the circumstance that all his, at least the earliest, lyrical, dramatic and epic productions must be looked upon as „fragments of a great life-confession the gaps in which he subsequently endeavored to fill up by means of his autobiography“, and that „he could not help converting whatever rejoiced or tortured, or otherwise lively engaged, him, into an image, a poem, in order that he might thus correct his notions concerning external things, and inwardly tranquillize himself about them.“ We, therefore, since Werther's story is proveably in very many respects Goethe's own story, Werther's character Goethe's own character, very naturally take for granted that he himself, when at Wetzlar, was really in love with Charlotte Buff, Kestner's betrothed, and that it cost him *some degree* and *for a brief while* even a very considerable degree of pain and self-control to tear himself away from her, and voluntarily to leave Wetzlar; yet, nothing like such a degree as could have disposed him to shoot himself on that account! For, not only did he on the very day or so after his separation from Lotte and his departure out of Wetzlar compose his courageous and beautiful *Pilgers Morgenlied*, in which he expressly rejoices at, and boasts of, his „Freude zu leben und Muth“, but he also almost immediately afterwards at Coblenz conceived a new passion (Maximiliane La Roche). Indeed, as before said, despite sundry *appearances*, but *mere* appearances, to the contrary, this very

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Viehoff, *Goethe's Leben*, B. I, p. 203.

sovereign in the realm of mind was, methinks, a somewhat coldly speculative or, if you like, impulsively capricious ordinary mortal in matters of the affections, and anything but a likely person to commit suicide *for love*, or aught else that leads less clear-sighted and less cool-hearted young men into this rash and passionate act.

After these preliminary statements, we approach the composition itself, and venture to suggest the following particulars as the most probable mode of accounting for the *contents* of the novel under consideration. As this work lies before us in its present form, suicide may be said to pervade it in some such manner even as the Ghost of the murdered king pervades the drama of Hamlet: allusions to suicide, sympathetic suicidal narratives, fervent ejaculations about it run through the entire little book, and almost from the very outset engender in us a kind of presentiment that the first Winter's snow will spread its cold shroud over the self-sought grave of the hero who is introduced to us as dreamily basking amid the blossoms and buddings of Spring. To show this, I should have to transcribe a fair third of the novel, which thing nobody can wish me to do, since almost everybody has read the novel itself, if not in the original, yet in some one of the several French or English¹⁾ translations. — Werther is a young man with more inborn talent and exquisite sensibility than outward station and business-routine, is brought into immediate contact with aristocratic and diplomatic circles, and experiences a hard struggle to reconcile himself to, or even to endure, the narrowness, shallowness, coldness, and haughtiness of those with whom he had daily to deal. Moreover, he becomes deeply, absorbingly enamoured of a virtuous and amiable young lady who was already betrothed to another lover, so that avowed reciprocity and wedded possession are hopeless impossibilities unto him. Such is the twofold painful, tragic dilemma in which our hero is placed by the author: the former one natural enough, but the latter one already in and by itself more or less immoral, view it as we may, since the said young lady herself was sufficiently happy in the choice she had previously

¹⁾ By the by, I learn from the second volume of Moore's work, that some person translated, anno 1786 our booklet into English under the title of „Werter and Charlotte, a German story“, and entered in an Introduction and in Notes at considerable length on the question of suicide. This version I have never seen; but Moore, who made it his text, preached a sermon, *actually some fifty pages long*, for the purpose of contraverting and condemning our Novel. I read it, the sermon, without much edification.

made. However, being once in the said dilemma, how can he be extracted? how can he extricate himself? *Only and necessarily by suicide*: such is the answer which our Novel gives. — Granted, if the young man be at bottom short-sighted, vain, weak, and, albeit in a somewhat refined manner, yet sensual, selfish, cowardly, and, though in self-deceptive and more or less unconscious wise, diseased in imagination, effeminate in feeling, perverse in will. Outward and inward discomfort gradually becomes too great, and, if such a one will not pine away in sheer melancholy,¹⁾ and cannot become a vulgar criminal,²⁾ he must hie himself away by a violent death from the scene of struggle and conflict and disappointment. And, were it thus, we might suppose Werther a most artistic and instructive psychological and social *warning*, so to speak, and, placing it in the hands of similarly organized and situated persons, say: behold! the end of all such as do not courageously control their sensibilities betimes. — But no! not thus, but far otherwise. Thence, as it seems to me, the palpably dangerous, the thoroughly untrue, the practically pernicious element of the Novel; or, if these expressions should appear too harsh, its one-sided standing-point, its unsatisfactory result.

Doubtless, Goethe did not intend to represent Werther as a paragon of wisdom, as a model of excellence; but yet, he has apparently concealed from us Werther's own weakness or guilt in which his difficulties partly originated, has not only made Werther throughout from first to last calmly meditate and mature a pistol-shot as a natural, reasonable, justifiable, nay, internally necessary solution of the said difficulties, and has, by portraying him, albeit with a master's hand, „too beautifully“, by endowing him with an unusual measure of clear and acute intellect, and of amiable and pure sensibility, and thus encircling, as it were, his brow with a dazzling halo, *imperceptibly led the reader to make similar concessions in Werther's favor*. — Long before the catastrophe itself, Werther holds a long conversation with Albert (pp. 65—72 of the separate edit. of 1824) on the subject of suicide. Albert has asserted that it is foolish, repulsive, weak, vicious to shoot one's self; has said this in the spirit and form of utter triteness and baldness; it is a mere exclamation, thrown out without much meaning, and left without any basis. Werther then

¹⁾ Vide Miller's *Stegwart*. ²⁾ Cf. the story of Hackman in „*Love and Madness*“, which novel is, however, known to me only through the medium of literary notices.

takes up the subject with fervid enthusiasm, and maintains that in a measure no action is in and by itself sinful, but becomes so only through the actor's motive; that all extraordinary natures are diseased, all great actions impassioned, and that suicide is the breaking of tyrannous fetters, the exertion of all our forces, nay, even the overstraining of them, and, consequently, anything but a cowardly deed; that, as there are diseases which, having reached their acme, consume the human body, there are likewise passions which, being bereft of all sobriety (*Nüchternheit*, discretion, temperance, the Socratic *σωφροσύνη*, for which we have, I believe, in English no exactly correspondent term), must of necessity destroy the mind; and that the succumbing to passions and the succumbing to diseases is, at bottom, one and the same thing, a something necessary and, consequently, not anything blameable, because Nature is unable to find any other sort of outlet. — Such are the three main points of argumentation for suicide, ingenious, sophistic, captious, and clothed into the bargain with all that wonderful power of attractive diction by which in a great measure our whole brief epic or didactic novel astounded and electrified almost the entire European literary world. And Albert, portrayed throughout the book (vide on this matter Kestner's bitter reproaches in a letter to Goethe, contained in the work above mentioned, and cf. Viehoff, *ubi supra*, §. II, pp. 122, 133) that he might serve for a sort of foil to Werther himself, we might say, as rather placid, weak and borné in feeling, imagination and mind than as manfully strong in will and genuinely sharp-sighted, makes no reply, has no reply to make, except the well-bred, pedantic, ossified remark that a *sensible* man at least does not *act* thus. Whereupon, Werther suddenly breaks off the discourse, having thus gained an easy, though inglorious, victory: inglorious, I said; for, no doubt, counter-arguments, and even vigorous ones, lay very near, e. g. that passion is in its nature often mere psychic disease, often only another name for folly or even sin, may render vice victorious, but does not therefore supply a valid excuse for vice, may, rather, be only a mystic sort of vapor ascending out of a fenny ground, a mere sublime sort of thunder which a destructive fluid accompanies, etc. Justly, therefore, as I take it, Engel observes.¹⁾ „Die spitzfindigsten Scheingründe für die That sind mit aller Stärke der Beredsamkeit vor-

¹⁾ *Philosoph für die Welt*, Th. I, p. 50.

getragen, indeß die wahren Gründe dawider übergangen oder umgeschickt verfochten werden."

Turning now to Goethe's already mentioned autobiography, we find therein very ample details not only about the origin of this novel, but also about his *own* position to the topic of suicide. Some of these we will merely allude to, others we will extract.¹⁾ Goethe had, according to his own confession, at earlier periods of his life occasionally experienced a more or less strong temptation to destroy himself, either in consequence of some individual distressing circumstance, or from a general feeling of unsatisfiedness, i. e. *taedium vitae*. This temptation which he himself, as it appears to me without any very great trouble, had at all times managed to overcome, he wished to incorporate with various other interesting incidents of his own life and to trace and illustrate with all the knowledge of the human heart and all the artistic power at his command. For some time already he had been meditating on a suitable form and story for his contemplations and delineations, when the death of Jerusalem came to his aid as a welcome incident for one portion of his work, and he made just as much use of it as fitted into such other events of his own career as he thought proper to communicate in this disguised manner to the public. In four weeks, spent in the utmost seclusion, the Sorrows of young Werther were composed, though many a previous year had been spent on the secret, mediate preparatory labor. He thus at once and for ever rid himself of all suicidal propensities by casting whatsoever had annoyed and burdened him upon — Paper, into — Print, among — the Public. This was, perchance, a somewhat selfish and reckless mode of freeing himself; but it was, at all events, in perfect keeping with his peculiarly impulsive and plastic character. — Whether he himself at that or any other period of his life judged of suicide as he has let Werther do? Probably, not very differently; but we will let him testify for himself.

When, anno 1772, he had been informed that his friend Goué (the report subsequently proved false) had shot himself, he wrote.²⁾ „Ich ehre auch solche That, und bejammere die Menschheit und lass alle Krote von Phylisters Tabakbrauchs Betrachtungen drüber machen und sagen: Da habt ihr's. Ich hoffe nie meinen Freunden mit

¹⁾ Buch XIII, pp. 210—236 in B. XIX of the 1819 edit. of his *Werke*. Cf., however, also Buch XII, pp. 150—158, 171—173. ²⁾ Göthe und Werther, p. 60.

einer solchen Nachricht beschwerlich zu werden." On Jerusalem's death he writes in the same year¹⁾ thus. „Der unglückliche Jerusalem. Die Nachricht war mir schrecklich und unerwartet, es war gräßlich, zum annehmlichsten Geschenk der Liebe diese Nachricht zur Beilage. Der unglückliche. Aber die Teufel, welches sind die schändlichen Menschen die nichts genießen denn Spreu der Eitelkeit, und Götzendienst in ihren Herzen haben, und Götzendienst predigen, und hemmen gute Natur, und übertreiben und verderben die Kräfte, sind schuld an diesem Unglück, an unserm Unglück. hohle sie der Teufel ihr Bruder." The following few extracts are from his autobiography (pp. 221, 212, 214, 220, 222, 230). „Jener Stel vor dem Leben hat seine physischen und seine sittlichen Ursachen, jene wollen wir dem Arzt, diese dem Morallisten zu erforschen überlassen, und bei einer so oft durchgearbeiteten Materie, nur den Hauptpunkt beachten, wo sich jene Erscheinung am deutlichsten ausdrückt." „Dieses sind eigentlich die Symptome des Lebensüberdrußes, der nicht selten in den Selbstmord ausläuft, und bey denkenden in sich gekehrten Menschen häufiger war als man glauben kann." Denke man sich nun, und man wird ein ungedulbiges Streben, sich aus einer solchen Klemme zu befreien, nicht unnatürlich finden." „Der Selbstmord ist ein Ereigniß der menschlichen Natur, welches, mag auch darüber schon so viel gesprochen und gehandelt seyn als da will, doch einen jeden Menschen zur Theilnahme fordert, in jeder Zeit=Epöche wieder einmal verhandelt werden muß." Hier (he has been quoting Montesquieu on heroes and great men) aber ist von solchen Personen nicht die Rede, die ein bedeutendes Leben thätig geführt, für irgend ein großes Reich oder für die Sache der Freyheit ihre Tage verwendet, und denen man wohl nicht verargen wird, wenn sie die Idee die sie beseelt, sobald dieselbe von der Erde verschwindet, auch noch jenseits zu verfolgen denken." „Diese einzige That (viz. the magnanimity and deliberateness with which Otho had slain himself) schlen mir nachahmungswürdig und ich überzeugte mich, daß wer nicht hierin handeln könne wie Otho, sich nicht erlauben dürfe, freywillig aus der Welt zu gehn. Durch diese Ueberzeugung rettete ich mich einst nicht sowol von dem Voratz als von der Grille des Selbstmords, welche sich in jenen herrlichen Friedenszeiten bey einer müßigen Jugend eingeschlichen hatte." Die wahre Darstellung aber hat keine (viz. didactic purpose). Sie

¹⁾ Ibid. p. 66.

billigt nicht, sie tadeln nicht, sondern sie entwickelt die Gefinnungen und Handlungen in ihrer Folge und dadurch erleuchtet und belehrt sie." — In the year 1812, an adult step-son of the well-known musical composer and friend of Goethe's, Zelter, shot himself in a most determined manner, without any fully clear motive, except that he had been dissipated and imprudent in more ways than one. Zelter who resided in Berlin communicated this tragical occurrence to his old friend at Weimar who had known the deceased personally and had once shown him some kindness. In Goethe's brief reply to Zelter's lengthy epistle the following mark-worthy passage occurs.¹⁾ „Ueber die That oder Unthat selbst weiß ich nichts zu sagen. Wenn das *taedium vitae* den Menschen ergreift, so ist er nur zu bedauern, nicht zu schelten. Daß alle Symptome dieser wunderlichen, so natürlichen als unnatürlichen Krankheit auch einmal mein Innerstes durchrast haben, daran läßt Werther wohl Niemand zweifeln. Ich weiß recht gut, was es mich für Entschlüsse und Anstrengungen kostete, damals den Wellen des Todes zu entkommen, so wie ich mich aus manchem spätern Schiffbruch auch mühsam rettete und mühselig erholte.“

Consequently, throughout his life Goethe's own personal views on our topic were, to say the very least, extremely lax and indifferent; and he most assuredly did not take even the slightest trouble in his *Werther* to induce the public at large to believe that they were not decidedly favorable to suicide. Thence, I cannot but conscientiously agree with such of the German critics as consider the Sorrows of young Werther a species of apology for, not to say justification and transfiguration of, suicide, though not a few German literary celebrities have *most indignantly* put their veto upon this view. One might also compare in this respect the treatment of our theme in *Egmont* (more especially as regards Clärchen), in (the first part of) *Faust*, in the natürliche Tochter (*Eugenie*), in *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* (as regards several personages) and above all in the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, of which last work we have spoken, for a *specific* purpose, in §. 10 already, and concerning which, I may here add, Eichendorff in his pious and spirited, but sadly ultramontane and hyper-romantic, work says right out²⁾ that Selbstmord is one of the lessons therein taught. At all events, however, the public, more especially the youth, of Germany and other

¹⁾ Briefwechsel zwischen Göthe und Zelter, Th. II, p. 43 ff. ²⁾ Der deutsche Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts in seinem Verhältnisse zum Christenthum, 1851, p. 100.

countries in Goethe's time and up to this day understood the Novel under discussion in this manner: and the practical effects were and have remained accordingly.

In the commencement of the second half of the 18th century, the spirit of so-called *sentimentality* had come with a vengeance over the literature of Germany, and with it a gloomy view of earthly life, a brooding disrelish of earthly life. Goethe himself seeks the cause thereof, to a great extent at least, in the influence which British literature, e. g. Young's *Night Thoughts*, Gray's *Elegy*, Macpherson's *Ossian*, and even Shakspeare's *Hamlet*, had commenced to exercise. At all events, proof sufficient thereof may be found in Klopstock, the Göttingen *Heinrich*, etc. Thence, the all-hail! with which the Sorrows of young Werther were greeted, and the „*furor Wertherinus*“, a term which was coined to express a suicidal passion, began to rage, very many of the author's countrymen and countrywomen, besides not a few young persons in other lands, thus picking up in good faith and swallowing with avidity the sickly, poisonous stuff which he himself, knowing and feeling it to be nothing better, had by an act of poetry ejected out of his own vitals. Let us, by way of specifying only a very few well-authenticated prominent instances, think of Captain Arenswald who shot himself Sept. 19, 1781, and had been fond of reading this Novel during the latter part of his life;¹⁾ of Miss von Lassberg, one of Goethe's friends at the court of Weimar, who was found Jan. 17, 1778 drowned in the Ilme, with a copy of Werther's *Leiden* in her pocket;²⁾ of Günderode who stabbed herself at Winkel on the Rhine from an unhappy attachment to an already married Heidelberg Professor, the learned and amiable Creuzer, and who used to read Werther together with her friend, the well-known Bettina von Arnim, and speak much about suicide.³⁾ — Aye, Mme. de Staël was not far wrong, when she asserted that it had „caused more suicides than the most beautiful woman,“⁴⁾ nor does Goethe himself (in his *Autobiography*) deny that this aesthetical masterpiece of his proved a daemonic charm which wrought deadly ruin unto many. Therefore, we cannot but pronounce it, in a moral point of view,

¹⁾ Vide *Authentische Briefe des Hauptmanns Arenswald, nebst der Geschichte seines Todes mit Anmerkungen herausgegeben*, 1782, which book, however, is known to me only from Tzschirner's abstract of it. ²⁾ Vishoff, lib. cit. B. II, p. 380. ³⁾ *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*, Th. I, p. 78. ⁴⁾ *De l'Allemagne*, T. II, p. 7.

a great error; for no book can be veritably of good which proves a sort of impulse and guide for the many unto self-destruction; — and what we may justly complain of is this: that Goethe, as far as we can learn, never regretted this its influence, never penned ought to counteract it, never, if I may here employ serious language, like a man and a christian repented of it!

III. Ugo Foscolo's *le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802).

It is self-evident that Goethe's work would have been written, and written just as it is, had Rousseau's work not existed or not been known to Goethe; but the matter is somewhat different as regards the relation of Jacopo Ortis to Werther. If, however, Jacopo Ortis had been either suggested by or imitated from Werther, I should not here take notice of it, since it cannot possibly be our intention to discuss or even to mention all the literary effusions to which Werther gave birth. But, as far as I have been able to ascertain through careful reading, the Italian novel bears about the following relation to its German predecessor. Firstly, a certain young Italian, Ortis by name, really had shot himself — at Padua, if I recollect rightly — at about the time when Foscolo began to compose this work. Secondly. The resemblance of Foscolo's own life in many particulars to that of the hero of his novel cannot but induce us to think that the latter was really and essentially, just as much as Werther, autobiographical.¹⁾ Thirdly. Foscolo had already written most of the letters of Ortis, before he had ever read Goethe's Werther, albeit he, after he had perused the Werther, altered them considerably. Fourthly, the plot and even the spirit of the two Novels are very dissimilar: the plot of the Italian work is grander, because it has an *historical* background, and its spirit nobler, because it partakes also of *patriotism*. Thence, indeed, this same Ortis was at first entirely interdicted in Italy, and even subsequently for a considerable time allowed to be published and circulated only in a mutilated form; for then as likewise now Italy feared and hated far more any voice which raised itself against *governmental* tyrannies than one which raised itself against *dogmatical* superstitions or *moral* restraints, and her prohibitions and condemnations

¹⁾ His banishment on account of politics is known to everybody interested in Italian matters; but his disappointed attachment to a certain Isabella Roncioni, subsequently the spouse of the Marchese Bartolommei, the reader is, perhaps, not aware of.

fell more readily and severely upon political oppositions than upon ethical anomalies. If one half of young Ortis' sadness arose from the circumstance that a certain Theresa whom he loved and who loved him in return, had upon compulsion married a certain Odoardo to whom she had previously to her acquaintance with Ortis been engaged: the other half arose from the circumstance that he himself had to wander away, as a persecuted political exile, out of the fair City of the Lagoon which was at that period rapidly sinking into such partly self-incurred lot as now makes it resemble a mere huge, crumbling marble sarcophagus, raised over the ashes of its past glory and splendor and power. —

On an early stage of the story already, aye, from the very outset, a suicidal inclination has taken possession of the hero which gradually matures itself into a clear resolution, and terminates in his stabbing himself in the most premeditated manner. In one of his longest epistles, however, the reader is introduced to the principles on which he argues and justifies with and unto himself and others his intended action, the *substance* of his reasons being about as follows.¹⁾ 1. We are to bear, for the benefit of others, the agony of a life which is death? Such life-hatred as a mere living death must engender, unfits us for being really serviceable to others! — 2. Others are equally miserable? This fact does not render me less so; this consolation is, moreover, immoral, and the inference drawn from it, impotent; those others may do as they please, only let me do also what I like; Nature's commands to different persons are different, and the strength which she affords to different persons is also different! — 3. Duties towards society? I enjoy its benefits as long as I live: when I am dead, I do not want them, and need not then repay them; and moreover, what society calls its benefits are — have been to me — in reality tortures! — 4. Finally, as an exile, I cannot do any more good to society, or to my relatives; nay, to the latter I am a source of grief, anxiety, expense, and my mother cannot afford to make the pecuniary sacrifices to which I put her!

Thus the defence of suicide now before us is more designed, direct, emphatic than that contained in Werther. Foscolo can scarcely

¹⁾ The epistle dated Ventimiglia, 19 e 20 febbrajo. — By the by, an addition on the title-page of our novel affirms „tratte degli autografi“, and its motto is: „naturae clamat ab ipso vox tumulo.“

be said even to pretend to adduce counter-arguments, counter-exhortations, counter-examples; he rather evidently intended to encourage, incite, persuade such as labored under internal or external sufferings to end their lives voluntarily. He stands before us as a *glowing Italian*, not as a speculative German; as a man patriotically taking his *country's fate* to heart, not only selfishly brooding over his own individual discomfort. — And — this is the only point which remains for notice — what Foscolo let *Ortis* in such fashion candidly pen, was the undoubted expression of his own pro-suicidal opinions, at that period of his life at all events. At least, a certain G. Bartholdi assures us¹⁾ that also eight or ten years later Foscolo still entertained the conviction that, in order to live free and valiant, one must learn to die freely and valiantly, but that he repented of not having kept the said conviction to himself alone; and a M^{me} Teotochi Albrizzi who knew him personally, says²⁾ „life, it seems, is only dear to him, because he can dispose of it according to his pleasure.“

However, he did not do so. The English reader may remember that this wayward, excitable, credulous man of genius and erudition died a natural death among ourselves, amid debts and difficulties, anno 1827. After having led, as political fugitive, a sort of romantically adventurous and chequered literary and professional life for some time in London, first, unless my memory deceive me much, courted and feasted as a public character and lecturer, and subsequently flung aside as a foreigner, a non-equal, a pauper: one of the many who are weak and vain enough to allow themselves — think, kind reader, of Robert Burns at Edinburgh! — to be patronized and caressed by people of wealth and fashion as long as their society helps to while away such people's dull, weary hours, and then — I need not tell you, who know how such matters are managed in lavishly hospitable and heartlessly proud England, the rest. — — —

And this same trefoil of pro-suicidal master-novels we will leave now „alone in their glory“, such as it is; for they may fairly be regarded not only as the most classical productions of their kind,

1) Vide p. 225 ff. of the bewilderingly copious more than one hundred pages of *bibliographische Zusätze* which are contained in the German edition which was printed in London 1817, the version being from the 15th Italian edition.

2) Ibid. p. 330, *Num.*

but also as the prototypes of all kindred novellistic pro-suicidal compositions. Therefore, only three or four brief and simple remarks, ere we conclude this Chapter.

That I have confined myself, as regards post-reformatorial ages, to *pro-suicidal* performances, is according to the principles which will be found laid down for philosophical prosaists on pp. 164—166 of §. 74; else, I might have felt myself tempted to speak of e. g. Richardson's *Clarissa* and Chateaubriand's *René*.

That I do not deem myself called upon to notice at any length e. g. the most modern French Novels, the reader can easily believe. Else, where should I begin? and where end? The few I have read, and carefully too, warrant me in asserting that suicide is in a comparatively very large number of them exhibited in a rather favorable light than otherwise, aye, exhibited with a singular measure of zest in a morally false and deceptive light. No doubt, the actual state of society furnishes materials in abundance for suchlike productions; they are the mirrors of our time, the reflexes of its multifarious grievances and frailties. But, on the other hand, who could venture to deny that suchlike productions in their turn potentially serve to add new materials to those already existent?

That a Novel ought to be in an exclusive spirit evangelical, or coquettishly and foppishly puseyitical, or controversially dogmatical, or even ethically pedagogic, I, of course, do not believe, and most certainly I do not wish that it should be so. Indeed, nothing has appeared to me more thoroughly tedious and sickening than sundry so-called religious and theological novels which have been published lately among ourselves — „*exempla sunt odiosa*“ —; but, at the same time, a genuinely artistic and poetic work *cannot but* bear ethical fruits unto the individual reader and the public at large.

Even the most genial modern writers of Novels seem to take for granted that suicide, like Love, is all but a necessary ingredient in their respective stories; yet, looking at the matter closely, is it not frequently used as a mere convenient shift, and does it not prove as little an ingenious item in the plot as a welcome phenomenon to the reader? Cf. e. g. „*Ruth*“ and „*Yeast*.“

FIRST SECTION.

CLASSICAL PAGANISM.

CHAPTER I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

§. 22. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Howsoever markedly and essentially different from each other the two great peoples of classical antiquity in sundry respects, doubtless, were, yet it has seemed to me not only justifiable, but also expedient, to amalgamate them in the present Chapter, i. e. to place no other partition-wall between them than that which the mere names themselves of the authors brought forward and discussed will naturally and necessarily raise. My reasons for this procedure are as follows.

Almost as soon as the ancient Greeks appear on History's stage, shaping Phantasy and musing Science are visible; and as they sat at this nation's cradle, so they accompany it faithfully and fondly through successive generations from century unto century, and do not quit it until it itself may be said to die away, and even then they, as it were, sing its dirge in touching and lofty strains. Of Art we have not here to speak at all; nor of Philosophy either in all its directions and characteristics, but, rather, only in such of them as bear upon our theme, consequently *Ethics* and *Politics*: which from the age of Pythagorism to that of Neo Platonism were ever accomplishing their lovely and lordly mission, rising gradually and then, after they had reached their utmost possible point of height, gradually falling, and exhibiting a glorious spectacle in almost their every phase, psychologically most instructive and often peculiarly interesting, when error would seem to environ them. No amount of acuteness, no

extent of erudition can solve the problem: whence and how came, as such predominant plastic sense in the representation of the Beautiful, so such pre-eminent speculative gift and depth towards the search of the True to be apportioned to the ancient Greeks in so specific a manner? Enough: the Deity willed it to be thus, and Nature did His bidding.

Equally clear and certain it is, likewise, that the ancient Romans derived, at a comparatively late period, as the poetic impulses, so the philosophic elements, of their mental culture, from the Greeks. When, therefore, e. g. Lucretius, Cicero, Seneca philosophize, they not only willingly acknowledge Greek influences and manifestly attach themselves to Greek systems, but, in point of fact, do nothing more than reproduce, in the shape of extracts, epitomes, versions, adaptations, the methods and results of Greek thought; and, consequently, however felicitous they may have been in their selections and however interesting they may have become to posterity by their compositions, original and independent thinkers they were not. We have already seen (§. 19) that e. g. Lucretius merely represented and defended the tenets of Epikuros in verse; and e. g. the verdict which even so vain-glorious a man as Cicero gives on his own multifarious purely philosophical writings is the modest, but true, one that they are ἀπόγραφα, mere copies, of Grecian models.¹⁾ Thus, though proud Roma could justly boast that her military eagles had made successful prey of the various Hellenic tribes, she did not disdain to sit, as a humble and more or less docile disciple at the feet of Athenian thought and lore.

Indeed, if this our Essay were on what we might term a *purely speculative*, a *pointedly scientific*, question, we should be, perhaps, quite justified in limiting ourselves, as far as classical philosophy is concerned, to the Greeks, thus ignoring the Latin writers entirely. But the topic of our immediate investigation belongs in a very great measure to what we must call *practical* philosophy, the philosophy of life with which strong common sense and sound moral feeling, endowments or qualities in which the Romans, as compared with the Greeks, were anything but deficient, have well nigh as much to do as either metaphysical acuteness or a particular method of philosophizing. Nay, are not Ethics in the usual sense

¹⁾ Epp. ad Atticum, lib. XII, ep. 52.

of the term, and Politics which are, as it were, Ethics applied not only to each individual as such, but to the State as a community of individuals, the descent of Philosophy from the heights of Logics and Physics — in the antique sense of these words — into the more level ground of human right-doing and human well-being, and, consequently, into the essentially and necessarily Practical? Therefore, even the mere clearly and rigorously stated opinion of an educated, a thinking, and sterling Roman writer, e. g. Tacitus and the younger Pliny, though by no means a philosopher *ex professo* at all, on the right or wrong, wisdom or folly of suicide is worthy of mention and entitled to notice, though he should have left his opinion unsupported by arguments and devoid of all logically developed form; and a *fortiori* we must consider it our duty to record and comment upon the testimonies of such Roman writers as have argued our theme on the ground of principles which they expressly adduce, albeit the substance of their argumentations may easily be traced to Greek sources, to Pythagoras, Sokrates, Plato, Aristoteles, and, more especially, to Zeno and Epikuros; for, if the idea itself he borrowed, the expression of the idea is not unfrequently to some extent characteristic and original, i. e. more or less genuinely Roman, and, inasmuch as the real reasons for or against the lawfulness and rationality of suicide from the standing-point of classical Paganism are of small compass and few in number, we may justly feel all the more strongly tempted to take some interest in, and to bestow some attention upon, the very *simile* and *tone* in which those reasons have been couched and urged.

Moreover, towards the time of the Fall of the Republic and during the early ages of the Imperial Sway, the question about the right or wrong of self-slaughter assumed among the Romans a character of more or less absorbing moral interest, because it had become a question of immediate personal and patriotic importance. For, though suicide would not appear to have been often resorted to, or to have been especially popular in the previous ages of Roman story, it became most disproportionately frequent from, we might say, the day on which the battle of Pharsalus was lost until the time when Trajan received the imperial purple, nor it is by any means difficult to account for the almost disease-like epidemic and tragically fashionable character it in those days assumed. When those ancestral institutions to which a people has clung for half a dozen

centuries with national pride, ethical severity, and almost a species of religious reverence, are shaken in their very foundations, or even crushed into the most humiliating fragments; when intestine warrings and contentions spill the blood and scatter the possessions of thousands upon thousands of citizens in the capital and the adjacent territories; when corruption and treachery find in almost every class of the community their instruments, and cunning and wantonness their victims; when Caesars, *less than human*, suck with vampyre-like craft, cupidity and cruelty the life out of whatsoever is most free and noble, most grand and glorious, and a Senate, once brilliant through its eloquence and mighty through its decrees, is a mere playball of party and caprice, and with a voice spectrally appalling and a servility bordering upon madness *apotheosizes* those very Caesars: *then* it is anything but unnatural, if the wise, the virtuous, the sensitive, the unprotected, the oppressed, the vanquished bethink themselves of an asylum of their own creating into which no human tyranny, brutality, schemes and wiles can any longer pursue them; if a people, unto whom their forefathers had bequeathed no inconsiderable legacy of love of freedom, of patriotic pride, of temperamental valor, of practical intelligence, and whose former native religious feelings and believings have, the longer the more, been hushed and stifled amid the din of arms and beneath the inroads of the later somewhat adulterated elements of philosophic speculation, flee to the garden of Epikuros and the hall of Zenon, and either sensually fling life's cup away, after its pleasures have been sipped out to the very dregs, or more nobly grasp yon „bare bodkin“, and accord to it the right, because it possesses the might, „to end the heart-ache and the thousand ills that flesh is heir to.“ And, verily, both Epikurism and Stoicism won applause and wrought conviction, as among many of the most depraved and foolish, so among many of the wisest and noblest, Romans, men and women, in those times of Rome's Decline and Fall, and bore suicide, deliberate and determined, as one of their frequent fruits. Of the bad we will be silent, and look only at the good! Well, then, behold yon nameless, but worthy, senator whom Tacitus introduces to us speaking, prior and his self-inflicted death, to those around him thus.¹⁾ „Non crudelitatem, non clementiam cujusquam experiar, sed liber et mihi

¹⁾ Ann. XVI, 16.

ipsi probatus anteibo periculum. Vos obtestor, ne memoriam nostram per moerorem quum laeti retineatis, adjiciendo me quoque iis, qui sine egregio publica mala effugerunt.“ And he is only one of the many whose „honestos (civium) exitus, tristes tamen et continuos“ the soul-anatomizing, noble-minded, graphic historian laments.¹⁾ Or, behold yon magnanimous and heroic Thræsea opening his veins under Nero's rule with the significant and pathetic exclamation:²⁾ „unto thee, Zeus Liberator, do I consecrate this blood!“ And he is only one of the many whose end the mean-spirited and minute Dio Cassius has recorded for the sorrow or horror of posterity.

One preliminary remark more.

Even the most superficial enquirer into the philosophy of classical antiquity in general is, of course, aware that all we know, or can ever hope to learn, about it on any one given topic is, at best, a mere *Fragment*. Of the thousands upon thousands of works, the lists and titles of which chance to have been preserved, how very few, comparatively speaking, have survived the destructive power of either natural accidents or of the zeal and envy of bigotry and antagonism, and reached us; and even among such few, how very rarely the entire works of any one single writer, howsoever renowned his name may have been in his own day! What ancient story fabled of the books of the Sybil, has, at all events, been fulfilled in the fate of classic literature: two thirds had been burnt, or had perished by some other means, ere the remaining third was delivered over to the custody of modern literary Augurs.

And, as regards our immediate topic, we cannot for one moment doubt, if we merely glance at the superscriptions of the now irrecoverably lost works of Greek philosophers as we find them catalogued e. g. in the 3rd cent. of our era by Diogenes Laërtius in his dry, but instructive, sketches,³⁾ that very many of the said works contained disquisitions on, or allusions to, suicide, nay, that, perhaps, some few of them discussed this very theme chiefly, if not solely. Even, however, of the Fragment of ancient classic literature which has remained to us, we shall have to make only a judiciously select use, if we would avoid tedious and barren repetitions and tri-

¹⁾ Ibid. V, 6. ²⁾ Dion Cassius, lib. 62, c. 26. ³⁾ We have often already quoted his *de vitis, dogmatis et apophthegmatibus clarorum virorum*, and here merely state that such quotations as will occur in the sequel are made from Meibom's celebrated edition.

vialities. Only master-minds and influential writers seem to call for, or to be worthy of, *minute analysis*; and among these, again, only such as have thought proper to record their verdict on our theme distinctly and emphatically, not only in vague words or by incidental hints. — The notice of every petty passage of every historian or epitomist would only disturb the unity of plan, and weaken or confuse that mental image we will endeavor to impress upon ourselves; nevertheless, whatsoever in more or less cursory and allusive passages may seem calculated to complete our insight into this portion of our historical delineation, shall be mentioned as opportunity may offer.

§. 23. PYTHAGORISM.

I. Pythagoras (in the 6th and 5th centuries a. C.).

As amid all the strange mixture of mythical adornments and historical facts which environ the carcer and bear testimony to the efficacy of this great ethical thinker and political organizer much may be discovered and relied upon that cannot but tend to inspire us with a singular degree of respect for his character and interest in his teachings: so amid all the mystical and exaggerated elements and tendencies of his tenets and influences we may discern not a little of what in all ages must command attention and enlist sympathy, e. g. that νόμος ἐμψυχος, that vital inward law, which he endeavored to establish in his peculiar community, and that duty of „self-reverence“ which he strove to instil into his immediate disciples. With him Greek Philosophy, properly so called, would seem, for the first time, to have proposed to itself a more or less practical task, as well as a theoretically speculative one; and we, therefore, can scarcely be surprised that in his system and school our very subject should be said to have been, for the first time, expressly discussed, or that, taking what has been transmitted to us touching the spirit of his peculiar philosophy into consideration, suicide should have been by him emphatically and absolutely interdicted.

Yet, just as the first detailed life of Pythagoras was penned nearly ten centuries after the age in which he lived, so the first decision and, as far as I know, the only direct, authority we possess for ascribing to Pythagoras *himself* an express direct prohibition of suicide is that of Cicero who wrote five centuries after Pythagoras'

death. Cicero, in a well-known passage,¹⁾ the import of which is beyond doubt or dispute, says: „vetatque Pythagoras, injussu imperatoris, id est, Dei, de praesidio et statione vitae decedere.“ From what source, then, did the Roman orator draw his information? Upon what authority did he make this assertion?

It must, I presume, remain a more or less debateable question, whether, or not, Pythagoras himself left any written works behind him, since the testimonies of the ancients themselves on this matter are most conflicting and puzzling; probably, he did not; at all events, however, it is certain that none of his writings, even if any ever existed, have reached *us*; — nor am I aware of any reasonable ground for assuming that *Cicero* in his day had access to any. All *our* acquaintance with the import of the *immediate* or *personal* teachings of Pythagoras has to be derived solely from some few brief and disconnected sayings of his, or sayings ascribed to him, which have been preserved or communicated by e. g. Diogenes Laërtius and Plutarch. To suchlike sayings, variously called *symbola*, *carmina*, *αινιγματα*, figurative, strange, obscure, ambiguous utterances, we of later ages and in modern times might be said to stand in pretty much the same relation as we do e. g. to the allegorical pictures of early Christian art: the real meaning of both could be, for the greater part, perfectly intelligible only to those whom a more or less cotemporary and continuous discipleship and tradition had supplied with the right key of interpretation; for both often lean so fully upon early accidental inner and outer habitudes that later generations must needs be at a loss to discover the path which leads to true and full initiation into them, to discern the veritable *tertium comparationis* between the mystic image and the moral principle. As, on the one hand, figurative speech is always a proof that mental culture has commenced to operate and reveal itself, so it is, on the other hand, likewise, if applied in religious and philosophic teachings about the Divine and its relation to the World and to Man, a proof that thought has still to wrestle itself out of more or less sensuous perception into clearness and simplicity, out of, as it were, Mysticism into Dialectics. Thence, as language itself only gradually developed itself out of poesy into prose, so all dawning philosophy clothed itself in gnomic and parabolic diction.

¹⁾ De Senectute, c. 20.

However, among the said mysterious saws ascribed to *Pythagoras himself* not a single one has become known to me which, in whatever manner we may turn and twist figurative diction into ethical prescription, could fairly be said to contain a clear interdiction of suicide; indeed, some of them might even appear to convey a directly opposite meaning.¹⁾ Nor is it by any means certain that *Pythagoras himself* was the author of all the symbola later writers have ascribed to him. For instance, Diogenes Laërtius ascribes to him in almost the identical words a symbolum which Olympiodorus in his Scholion on *Phaedo*²⁾ designates merely as Πυθαγόρειον παράγγελμα, and which is as follows: μή ἀποτιθέναι ἀλλὰ συνεπιτιθέναι βάρη· Diogenes does not interpret it at all; but Olympiodorus says: τουτέστι, συμπράττειν τῇ ζωῇ, οὐκ ἀντιπράττειν. — and gives this more or less vague, though, doubtless, possibly thus interpretable, symbolum as the *reason why* (διότι) *Philolaos* ἔλεγε (δὲ καὶ ἄλλως) μή ἐξάγειν ἑαυτὸν. — Much less is the simile specified by Cicero as having been shaped and urged by Pythagoras (or the Pythagoreans) for an anti-suicidal purpose to be found among the symbola under mention.

Nor does the matter stand differently with the so-called „aurea Pythagorae carmina“, a brief, apophthegmatic representation of the popular tenets of our philosopher, composed, however, neither by Pythagoras himself nor by e. g. Philolaos, but, rather, to be regarded — this is the result even the New Platonist Hierocles had in his day arrived at — as an embodiment of the spirit of Pythagorism, and not as the words of any definite individual, let alone of Pythagoras himself. In which same aurea Pythagorae carmina our especial topic is not mentioned at all, unless we should, haply, incline to view the 18th line

ὣν ἂν μοῖραν ἔχῃς πράως φέρε, μὴδ' ἀγανάκτει

as a species of *indirect* prohibition of self-destruction.³⁾ Yet Hiero-

¹⁾ Two examples may suffice. Vide in Plutarch's treatise de liberis educandis, Opera, edid. Reiske, T. VI, p. 43, the symbolum μή ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ κ. τ. λ. and Plutarch's superadded explanation μέλλοντας — ἀθροεῖν; and in Diogenes Laërtius' life of Pythagoras, lib. VIII, segm. 17, p. 503, the symbolum διὰ δὲ τοῦ κ. τ. λ. and Diogenes' superadded explanation τοῦς — ἐπάγειν. ²⁾ As quoted by Wyttenbach in his edition of Platon's *Phaedon*, 1810, annotatio p. 130. ³⁾ One may take in also the immediately following apophthegm: at all events, both unitedly are full of weighty meaning in briefest wording.

cles himself¹⁾ does not so much as even allude to any such reference in this verse, though he does not fail, in the course of his very copious and very thoughtful commentary, to express his own anti-suicidal opinions as strongly as may be: from which circumstance we may, perhaps, feel ourselves justified in inferring that he himself, at all events, considered suicide incompatible with the spirit of the production he had undertaken to illustrate so zealously and so devoutly. Whilst, namely, interpreting a line which does not stand in any necessary or immediate connexion with suicide, he, after having said that the soul „will possess this purity, if it allow itself to be led away neither by sensual impulse nor by the mortal body, but apply itself as an essence of a different nature to other things, and devote to the former only just as much care as the divine law (ὁ θεῖος νόμος) commands, of which same divine law he then proceeds to say:²⁾ ἐξάγειν αὐτὴν (i. e. the λογικὴ ψυχὴ) πειρᾶσθαι μὴ συγχωρῶν, ἀλλὰ περιμένειν ἕως ἂν ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἀπολύσῃ ἡμᾶς.³⁾

We, therefore, must return to our previous question: whence did Cicero obtain his information? — from what source did he extract the above simile?

Beyond all reasonable doubt, simply and solely from an incidental passage in Plato's *Phaedo*, in which Dialogue — it itself will form the subject of our especial enquiry on the immediately following half dozen pages or so — Sokrates affirms that the interdiction of suicide had been uttered already ἐν ἀπορρήτοις, which much-disputed term Cicero, whether on his own hypothesis and responsibility, or whether in consequence of the exposition currently believed and adopted in his day, understood as referring to Pythagoras' own personal precepts, to the essential doctrines of Pytha-

¹⁾ The edition before me is Hieroclis philosophi Alexandrini commentarius in aurea carmina, &c., Graece et Latine, edid. Needham, 1709.

²⁾ Ubi supra, p. 160. ³⁾ On the same page, eleven lines previously, there is a passage in which according to Needham's rendering, „quam eam (i. e. the humana vita) omnino dimittere“ of αὐτὸν (i. e. the ἀνθρώπινος βίος) μεθεῖναι, Hierocles would be alluding to suicide also. Schulthess, however, in his *Bibliothek der Griechischen Philosophen*, pp. 170, 171, Anm. 48, reads μεταθεῖναι, mutare, so that the sense of the entire passage would be: „for it is far easier to arrange human life according to rules of Reason than to change the entire state of it which would be done, if we occupied ourselves singly and solely with investigations and contemplations.“ The reasons he assigns for this interpretation have inclined me to agree with him; his textual emendation which, he informs us, Winterton also had proposed, I willingly commit to the hands of others.

gorism. We are led to this assumption, firstly, by the identity of the simile introduced by Cicero and of that mentioned in the Phaedon, nay, by the closest possible resemblance — if we take into consideration that Cicero is only giving the main import in a free Latinization of the Greek original, and could not feel himself called upon to do more, since his purpose was chiefly a practical one — of the very words themselves. Sokrates declares man to be ἐν τῇ προῦρᾳ, and that he may not λύειν ἑαυτὸν or ἀποδιδράσκειν. Both the substantive and the verbs, however, admit of a twofold rendering, inasmuch as προῦρα signifies both *post* or *watch*, and *captivity* or *prison*, and λύειν and ἀποδιδράσκειν may refer equally well to *self-liberation* either from a *scntry's duty* or from *custody*. Which of the two translations ought to be preferred, we shall see by and by. We are led to the above assumption, secondly, by the context in which the simile occurs in Phaedo. Kebes and Simmias, with whom more specifically Sokrates discusses the topic of suicide, would appear to have stood at an earlier period in close personal intercourse with the *Pythagorean* Philolaos; and Sokrates, after having asked them, whether they had never heard anything about the unlawfulness of suicide from Philolaos, and they having replied „nothing accurate and circumstantial“, declares himself willing to tell them what he had *heard* (or *read*?) on the subject, implies that the Pythagoreans could and would tell them more about the matter, and introduces the above simile ἐν ἀπορρήτοις as something not his own, but, rather, as something he had merely learnt from the Pythagoreans, and which would afford material for further comment and discussion. That, however, the Sokratic ἐν ἀπορρήτοις in this passage may and must be interpreted as synonymous with, if not Pythagoras, yet Pythagorism, is what, first of all, will devolve upon us to endeavor to show.

Ἀπορρήτος, not to be uttered, i. e. interdicted, whether because abominable, or because sacred, allies itself in either shade of meaning easily to what we should call *secret*, *occult*, *arcane*. Therefore, if we conceive ἐν ἀπορρήτοις or ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ (for the singular is almost as frequent as the plural form) *adverbially*, we should have to translate it by, as it were, in hidden or covered, i. e. figurative, symbolical, speech; and it is clear from what I have already stated that this version would most aptly apply to Pythagorism. If, on the other hand, we conceive the expression at issue *substantively*,

and this is, perhaps, the more natural grammatical construction, it would be most fitly rendered, as it usually is, by „in (the) Mysteries“, which translation, however, naturally suggests the question: *what ἀπόρρητα?* For, as every scholar full well knows, classical antiquity speaks of very many so-called „Mysteries“, e. g. the Eleusinian, the Dionysian or Bacchic, the Orphic, so that the very term itself seems to send us at once floating upon an ocean most deep and apparently shoreless, if we bear in remembrance all the ingenuity and erudition displayed on this subject from the days of Scheffer and Warburton up to those of Creuzer and Lobeck. Happily, however, we may confine ourselves to the comparatively modest and easy task of briefly stating what others have already circumstantially proved, viz. that Pythagorism likewise had its *Aporreta*.

Indeed, it may, perhaps, be said to lie in the very nature of every religious and political communion and community such as the Pythagorean was, more especially in times when the people are still in the infancy of their culture, and in places where manifold inimical influences are still at work, to have certain corporate secrets, to observe silence on certain momentous and peculiar doctrines and precepts, except unto such persons as were sufficiently advanced, and had been duly prepared, to believe, to understand, and to use them aright. Indeed, the writings of classical antiquity are replete with the most unequivocal testimonies to the effect that there really were, in the school and system of Pythagoras and his followers, various degrees of communication, different stages of initiation, so-called exoteric and esoteric tenets, howsoever much after-times by fables and exaggerations may have distorted and mystified this circumstance. Very many passages from less well-known writers or writings Wyttenbach¹⁾ has collected and discussed; we will, however, content ourselves with adducing a passage from Herodotus²⁾ which he chances not to have mentioned. Whilst, namely, speaking of a certain kind of vestment, this Father of History incidentally states that the same religious custom of apparel may be found in the so-called Orphics and Bacchics (or Egyptians), and *Pythagorics*, the participators of, or initiated into, which *orgies* (τούτων τῶν ὀργίων) &c. And, as it seems to me, if we conceive our tenet of the imprisonment of the soul in the body — for *this* is that inter-

¹⁾ Ubi supra, pp. 134—139. ²⁾ Lib. II, c. 81.

pretation of our simile the correctness of which we shall endeavor to establish — in all such of its bearings as issued into metempsychosis, asceticism, mysticism, and conceive the inferred culpability of self-destruction in its antagonism to such herofication or deification as we may presume early mythographic singers to have vouchsafed unto sundry suicides: we might, haply, believe the said parabolic interdiction to have been, if not exactly by a literal prohibition, yet by its very symbolic investment itself, in some measure, at least, reckoned among those secret teachings which were in a manner not cast among the crowd who would not have comprehended them, and might have misunderstood them. Indeed, in general, Pythagoras may, perhaps, for a similar reason, have preferred rather to teach orally than to deliver his theories in a written form.

We must, however, now assign our reasons for considering Cicero's, as it were, *military* acceptance of the simile at issue inappropriate and unwarranted.

There are sundry passages still extant in ancient writers which, whilst treating of the Pythagorean doctrine of the connexion of the soul with the body, a doctrine not a little prominent in Pythagorism, one and all urge that the soul appeared to the Pythagoreans as *bound in the body*, and, as it were, by way of punishment *held in the captivity of the body*. Several of them are either quoted in the original Greek, or referred to, by Wytttenbach ubi supra, as also by Böckh¹⁾ in his excellent and inspiring monograph on Philolaos, and by Ritter²⁾ in his painfully lengthy and dry monograph on Pythagorism. Whereas, however, Böckh would fain place the doctrine of the blameableness of suicide in exact connexion with what Macrobius (Somn. Scip. I, 14) and Claudianus Mamertus (de statu animae II, 7) teach to the effect that Pythagoras and Philolaos said that the soul was *harmony*, is implanted in the body according to rhythm and an immortal agreement (per numerum et immortalem convenientiam), and loves the body, because it cannot use the senses without it, &c.: Ritter declares the blameableness of suicide, according to Pythagorism, to be inferred from the incarceration above alluded to, and, in so doing, seems to me nearer the point. We will, therefore, inspect the two passages to which the latter writer draws our specific attention.

¹⁾ Philolaos des Pythagoreers Lehren nebst den Bruchstücken seines Werkes, 1819, pp. 177—184. ²⁾ Geschichte der Pythagoreischen Philosophie, 1826, p. 220.

a. Athenaeus, on Alexandrine of the 3rd cent. p. C., has in his *Deipnosophistae*, or, Banquet of the Learned, preserved a passage¹⁾ in which, according to Klearchos, a pupil of Aristoteles', the Pythagorean Euxitheos, whose age is not known,²⁾ most broadly and emphatically asserts the penal incarceration of the soul in the body during terrestrial life, and as broadly and emphatically prescribes man's duty, on pain of heavier penalties, to eschew voluntary death, and to await, patiently and cheerfully, natural dissolution, more especially by old age, as the decree and act of the Deity, adding „such are the opinions which we embrace“ (τούτοις τοῖς δόγμασιν ἡμεῖς πεποιθότες).

b. The churchfather Clemens Alexandrinus, when speaking of Philolaos, declares the following saying of his worthy of note and remembrance.³⁾ „The ancient theologists and priests (μάντιες) testify that the soul is conjoined to the body through a certain punishment, and that it is buried in this body as in a sepulchre.“

But Böckh likewise makes mention of a passage in Iamblichus' life of Pythagoras (ch. 36 or last) in which the death of the Pythagoreans is figuratively paraphrased as a „becoming liberated from the body as from a prison, or, becoming rid of the body as of bonds.“ This same detailed biography, which I have perused, is most fabulous, confused, and in some respects even ridiculous; but its author himself assures us⁴⁾ that most of the writings of the disciples of Pythagoras were extant in his time, so that we may reasonably assume that he derived his information and his *phraseology* from ancient, more or less genuine, sources to which we have no longer access. Wherefore, I will add also the two following passages.⁵⁾ „For he (Pythagoras) reminded many of his familiars, by most clear and evident indications, of the former life which their soul had lived, *before it was bound to this body.*“ — „For as we came into the present life for the purpose of punishment, it is necessary that we should be punished.“ And from the sentences of Sextus the Pythagorean, the following testimony may likewise find a place here.⁶⁾

¹⁾ Lib. IV, c. 14. In Dindorf's recent edition T. I, p. 351 λέγειν ἐνδεχέσθαι — γῶμης. ²⁾ Ritter, ubi supra, p. 71. ³⁾ Strom. III, p. 433, edid. Sylb. In Potter's edition, however, it will be found in T. I, p. 518. The later churchfather Theodoret has, as Böckh, ubi supra, p. 181, informs us, transferred this passage from Clemens to his own pages in his work „on the cure of the false opinions of the Heathen“, p. 821 in Schulze's edition. ⁴⁾ Thomas Taylor's translation, 1818, p. 76 in ch. 23. ⁵⁾ Ibid. pp. 42. 61. ⁶⁾ In the appendix to the above volume, p. 274.

„He who unjustly expels a wise man from the body, confers a benefit on him by his iniquity. For he thus becomes liberated, as it were, from bonds.“

Moreover, we might affirm that Sokrates' critical objection to, and censure of, the said Aporet simile, viz. that it is „μέγας¹⁾ and not easy to see through“, apply perfectly well to the mystic and gloomy sense we are contending for, but, certainly, in a far minor degree, if at all, to the figure of a general and a watch. Indeed, when we come to discuss Cicero himself, we shall see that he, whilst arguing on two other occasions against suicide, really employs the figure of *prison* or *captivity* to represent man's relation to physical life, and unmistakeably also with reference to the very Phaedonic passage we are now discussing: wherefore, I cannot help surmising that he was led to the figure of *commander* and *post* on the present occasion by the influence which Stoicism had exercised over his mind; for we shall, when we come to treat of the tenets of the Stoa, more than once encounter, albeit, of course, pro-suicidally employed, the identical figure of „God sounding the trumpet for man to retreat out of life“: which would, consequently, appear to me even to have originated after the time of Plato; at least, I am not aware that it really occurs in Plato's writings, whereas there are, proveably, in them sundry other allusions to that interpretation of our simile which we believe to be the only admissible one here. For instance, in Cratylus, Sokrates, whilst etymologizing on the word σῶμα, body, indulges²⁾ in the following somewhat fanciful word-plays; for aught else they can scarcely be deemed. „This denomination seems to me capable of sundry interpretations, nay, in a high degree so, if we only modify it some little. For some affirm that it is a grave (σῆμα) of the soul, inasmuch as the latter is at present buried in it. Also that it is rightly called σῆμα (sign), because the soul makes known (σημαίνει) by it what it purposes to become known. However, the Orphic teachers appear to have given it this

¹⁾ What does this adjective here signify? Warburton translates: profound; Heindorf: difficult; Schleiermacher: weighty; Stanford: too affected. The internal evidence of the simile itself, palpably, speaks against the correctness of the last rendering, and the two first versions would make it merely synonymous with the immediately following epithet. The simile which Sokrates subsequently commends and adopts is *more homely, familiar* as well as more easy of comprehension, so that, perhaps, μέγας may be best translated by *high-strained, or far-fetched, or wide-ranging*. ²⁾ In Stallbaum's edition, p. 94.

name, inasmuch as, whilst the soul suffers what it has to suffer, it is in this fence, a species of prison, in order that it may be preserved (σώζεται), which is, consequently, as it is called, the custody (σῶμα) of the soul, until the latter shall have atoned for its guilt; and here one need not change a single letter." Another similar passage from the Gorgias we shall quote by and by.

Consequently, if, on the one hand, the image under mention be proveably Pythagorean, perfectly consonant with the spirit and tenor of Pythagorism, it would seem, on the other hand, to owe its origin to a still earlier age, to be, in point of fact, referable to the disciples of Orphism: so that what Sokrates calls „ὁ ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος λόγος“ may have stood in a primary direct connexion with the *sacred* and *mystic* Orphic doctrines.

Returning to the above cited passage from Clemens Alexandrinus, „οἱ παλαιοὶ θεολόγοι“ are especially the Orphikites, since Orpheus himself was wont to be called, as Apollodor¹⁾ informs us, par excellence ὁ θεολόγος; and Bückh²⁾ believes to see vestiges of this tenet in the well-known Thracian popular custom,³⁾ otherwise so contrary to natural feeling, of receiving man at his birth with grief and wail; for in Thrace the Orphic mysteries principally flourished. The reference of Sokrates in the above quoted passage of Cratylus to „οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα“ tells its own tale. Nor may it be out of place here to quote some few passages from the already cited life of Pythagoras by Iamblichus.⁴⁾ „Many of the mandates, however, of the Pythagoreans were introduced from the mysteries.“ „Nor is it to be doubted, that Pythagoras receiving many auxiliaries from Orpheus composed“, &c. „For it (his treatise Concerning the Gods) says: that Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus, was instructed in what pertains to the Gods, when he celebrated orgies in the Thracian Libethra, being initiated in them by Aglaophamus“, &c. „And, in short, it is said that Pythagoras was emulous of the Orphic mode of writing and (piety of) disposition.“ „And further still, it is said, that he was, &c., having learnt indeed some things from the followers of Orpheus, but others“ &c. To which testimonies I will, finally, add what Bähr annotates on the previously quoted passage from Herodotus.⁵⁾ „Quod denique Pythagorica commemorat, tenen-

¹⁾ Bibliotheca myth. I, 3, 2. ²⁾ Ubi supra, p. 181. ³⁾ Vide e. g. Herod. V, 4; Strabo, lib. XI. ⁴⁾ They will be found on pp. 100, 105, 109, 110, ⁵⁾ In his edition, vol. I, p. 664.

dum est, hujus disciplina instituta maximam partem repetita videri ex vetere Orphicorum disciplina ac doctrina; unde ipsum Pythagoram Orphicis mysteriis initiatum vulgo jactabant.“ But here we shall do well to cast anchor, and to leave to others, better qualified, or more daring, than ourselves, to sail on, unto whatsoever depths, or shores, uncertain waves may drift them!

Nevertheless, very many modern translators of Plato, e. g. even Schleiermacher himself, and very many modern writers on suicide, e. g. Formey, Garve (in their already quoted Essays), have bona fide adopted Cicero's version of the Phaedonic passage at issue; and we therefore, consider ourselves called upon to devote in passing a few words to its propriety and force, or, rather, its inappropriateness and weakness, as an anti-suicidal argument.

Warfare or battle as an image of life *in general*, and, consequently, warrior or soldier as a simile of man in his allotted work of life suggest themselves so readily, interpret themselves so easily, and commend themselves so fully that they may be found in almost every language and species of composition, e. g. in the O. T. (Joshua V, 14), in the N. T. (2 Tim. II, 3; Ephes. VI, 13—17), in innumerable passages of the churchfathers, and of modern poets. And it was, probably, this very circumstance which seemed to justify in the eyes of very many christian moralists the said figurative expression as a *specific* anti-suicidal argument. The classical precedent seemed to intensify its force in this capacity, when one remembered how vehemently the laws of Greece and Rome denounced, and how severely they punished, any breach of military discipline, any violation of military duty, abandonment of a sentinel-post,¹⁾ desertion from the ranks, swerving from what was considered the natural, social, and religious soldier-service of every citizen. But, nevertheless, the very fact that, as before said, the Stoics employed the identical figure of speech *pro-suicidally* tells considerably against its tenability, and, if I mistake not, on closer inspection it will be discovered to *halt* more or less. For instance, not to dwell upon various other points which modify or nullify the comparison, and, consequently, the argument, no sensible and humane Captain would be likely to compel or even to desire a sentry to remain *absolutely*

¹⁾ Cicero, ubi supra, employs, I presume, *praesidium* and *statio* *synonymously*; at least, I am unable to distinguish satisfactorily to myself between their possible references.

and *unconditionally* at his post, since he was placed there for the express purpose of acting, of being useful, not of merely suffering, of doing penance. It is true, he ought not to quit it from mere disrelish of it, from the sole feeling of momentary discomfort, from sheer fear of danger; but, if mutilated, debilitated, incapacitated from fulfilling his appointed task aright: may he not, nay, must he not, relinquish it entirely, i. e. take for granted that, if the Captain be made aware of his state, the latter will, as matter of course, issue not only the permission, but even the command, for immediate relief, i. e. release? The sentinel is not a statue there for mere show, but a reasoning being for more or less significant and momentous work! When we come to treat of the tenets of the Stoa, we shall see how possible and even easy it is to illustrate such a simile into a pro-suicidal bearing, to convert it unto a pro-suicidal purpose. However, I may safely leave that reader who may be fond of ingeniously pursuing analogies even regarding things between which there is not much that really deserves the name of analogy, to think out for himself more thoroughly what is inappropriate or inconclusive in the parallel under mention; and will content myself with merely remarking, once for all, that almost every anti-suicidal or pro-suicidal figure of rhetoric which we shall subsequently have to deal with, e. g. in this same Phaedon, in the Stoic writers, in Montesquieu, in Hume, must prove more or less defective and objectionable, if we attempt to reduce them to logical precision, to resolve them into distinctly enunciated principles. Indeed, no difficult and disputed problem can be solved by a mere simile, a mere parable. The task is to state and develop the thought first of all by distinct, definite, sufficient reasons, and to render these the foundation of argument: rhetorical and poetical similitudes come early enough as superstructures, for purposes of brilliancy and of beauty, of fancy and of feeling.

Yon other acceptation of *ἑρπουρά*, however, is too foreign to our Christian perceptions and sentiments to have become popular among modern anti-suicidal writers, and stands in closest connexion not only with the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and their fall in a past life, but also with the Pythagoric and Philolaic view that the *entire Universe* is held captive by the Divinity.¹⁾ But, perhaps,

¹⁾ Vide a relevant passage on this latter point quoted from Athenagoras by Böckh, *ubi supra*, pp. 151, 171.

something in spirit not altogether unkindred might be discerned in what Paul says of the *χρίστος* in a passage as pathetic as it is mysterious;¹⁾ and, though the tenet of metempsychosis *mythically* and *dialectically* developed, as it was in Pythagorism, has never found a place in the dogmatics of Christianity, albeit the one or the other christian theologian has inclined to think it not impossible, or improbable, that the human spirit hereafter may seek unto itself, if animal-like it be, some animal-like corporeal organism better suited unto itself; yet the *mystical* and *ascetical* elements and influences of some such tenet of the soul in the bondage of the body are traceable and tangible in much of what characterized Monkerly, Quietism, and even Quakerism in both the earliest and the comparatively modern ages of Christianity. The said tenet, however, has invariably led to a species of *indirect* suicide, as we shall see, when we come to speak of the patristic writers, and sometimes even to *actual* suicide, as e. g. the following incident may testify which the narrator²⁾ introduces, under the head of *St. Kyrill von Gellert*, expressly as „a sorry example of the unhappy consequences of the foolish opinion that the soul is imprisoned in the body as in a dungeon.“

„André, Sherif Quacker (sic) in London, a man anything but devoid of mental culture, had taken into his head that, the body being the prison of the soul, it would be meritorious to quit such prison as speedily as possible, and that it was desirable in the extreme to set the soul at liberty, even by suicide. His wife and their two daughters participating in the same view and wish, the four persons wrote and signed in common a confession of faith to the above effect, together partook of a farewell banquet in most joyful manner, and immediately afterwards hanged themselves.“

II. Philolaos (in the 5th cent. a. C.).

What we possess of the writings of this mediate disciple of Pythagoras consists in mere fragments, the genuineness and value of which, previously questioned or denied by sundry critics, Böckh would appear to me to have vindicated triumphantly in the very erudite and interesting monograph I have already more than once in this § referred to. About his life little seems known that may be relied upon, or is worthy of record; and I will here only inci-

¹⁾ Romans VIII, 19—22. ²⁾ Acta historico-ecclesiastica, Weimar, 1749, B. XIII, p. 307. The event occurred Nov. 12, 1748, the hero being then 72 years of age!

dentally state that the *one* book he is said to have composed must have been, as it were, a veritable „lion's whelp“, since Diogenes Laërtius, if his testimony be worth much on such a matter, informs us that Plato, who had been personally acquainted with Philolaos, purchased it for a very large sum, and that his Timaeus was indebted to it for much of its contents;¹⁾ and that Böckh conjectures the said work to have been tripartite, and to have received the generic title of Bacchoi, because it seemed like the product of holy contemplation, of mysterious enthusiasm, replete with deep and divine meaning, as if it were the oracle of a seer who read in the book of God.²⁾

I must, now, for the sake of distinctness, repeat the substance of a very small part of what I have previously stated. Sokrates, in the Phaedon, assumes as something natural and necessary that his friends Kebes and Simmias have been, in consequence of their earlier familiar intercourse with Philolaos, by the latter instructed concerning the unlawfulness of suicide. Whereupon Kebes replies that he had, indeed, heard from Philolaos that it was not right to destroy one's self, but that he had never heard anything clear about the matter from anybody. Sokrates then proceeds to argue the question; but his mode of expressing himself is, as far as a distinctive boundary-line between Philolaos and himself is concerned, so peculiarly ambiguous that even the most discriminating critics are at a loss to determine, whether what he adduces in demonstration of the non-permissibility of suicide be merely the result of what he had either *heard* or *read* on some previous occasion, and thus originally the mental property of Philolaos or the Pythagoreans, or, whether some portion of it, at least, be of his own inventing.

Either heard, or read: this is the first point of uncertainty.

Sokrates himself says that he had that, or much of that, which he is about to advance against suicide from mere hearsay. „I also, to be sure, can speak thereof only *from hearsay* (ἐξ ἀκοῆς); but what I chance to have *heard* (τυγχάνω ἀκηκοώς), I am in no wise loath to communicate to you.“ The most recent writer of critical

¹⁾ Vide his lives of Pythagoras, Philolaos and Plato, and cf. in this point of view more especially the last few chapters of the said obscure Platonic dialogue in which the Pythagoric doctrine of the transmigration of souls is manifestly conveyed. Vide also Iamblichus' life of Pythagoras, ch. 31, p. 142.

²⁾ Ubi supra, p. 37.

annotations on *Phaedon*, Schmidt, understands all this literally, takes Sokrates strictly at his word, and argues authoritatively in favor of the really mere hearsay.¹⁾ To Böckh (*ubi supra*, pp. 23, 24) and to Stallbaum (in the notes appended to his edition of our *Dialogue*), on the contrary, it appeared that Sokrates (or Plato?) had actually *read* what he puts forward. Let us think this matter carefully over with each other, and, if I mistake not, we, too, shall incline to side rather with the two latter critics than with Schmidt. We may very readily believe from what we know of Sokrates' habits of conversation and meditation that he was anything but what we might call a bookworm, that he had heard, thought, talked more than he had read. Thence, perhaps, it had become a habit of his, in times when mere book-devouring was, doubtless, neither so great an accomplishment nor so essential a requisite as in our own days, to refer everything rather to what he had gleaned in discussion than to what he had acquired by reading. Indeed, this was a part, we may say, of Sokratic Irony, of that simulated not knowing or knowing little so characteristic of the Athenian Sage: an outward bearing of modesty which sprung from deep consciousness of original power, a manner and turn which his hearers themselves must have gradually learnt to understand so fully that we can scarcely imagine them to have been ever seriously misled by the seeming falsehood.²⁾ Thus, for instance, in *Gorgias*³⁾ Plato lets Sokrates introduce a *similar topic* in a similar manner: having made mention of a couple of lines of Euripides' to the effect that, perhaps, life is dying and dying life, he proceeds: „and, haply, we are, indeed, dead, as I myself have *heard* already from the lips of one of the wise that we are now dead, and that our body is a grave of the soul (το σῶμα ἔστω ἡμῖν σῆμα). Here, too, the wise (ἄρχοντα τῶν σοφῶν) are, as all writers seem to agree,⁴⁾ *Pythagoreans*, and more specifically Philolaos; for similarly in the *Phaedrus* the Pythagoreans are expressly designated οἱ σοφώτατοι ἡμῶν.⁵⁾ What, indeed, should have pre-

¹⁾ Kritischer Kommentar über Phädon, pp. 7, 8. ²⁾ A casual remark of Böckh's (*ubi supra*, pp. 23, 24, 178) that by such irony „die etwas geringe schätzigste Behandlung des göttlichen Mannes verhüllt werden soll“ is not intelligible to me, Who is „the divine man“, Sokrates or Philolaos? By whom „concealed?“ Böckh ascribes, apparently, the irony in *Phaedo* to Plato solely; erroneously, however, as it seems to me. ³⁾ Vol. I, p. 191 in Cary's version. ⁴⁾ Vide e. g. Pfleßing, Versuche zur Aufklärung der Philosophie des Alterthums, 1790, B. I, Th. 2, p. 967. ⁵⁾ In Schleiermacher's Uebersetzung, Aufl. 1, p. 160. And *ibid.* pp. 163, 169 there occur palpable enlogizing allusions to the Pythagoreans.

vented Sokrates (or Plato?) from actually *perusing* the *one* book of Philolaos, so celebrated a performance by a cotemporary philosopher the inmost kernel of whose thinking was, evidently, as far at least as our topic is concerned, not by any means incongenial with his own mind and meaning? And inasmuch as in Phaedo, Gorgias and Cratylus the *very wording* itself of the thought is adduced, discussed, criticized, suchlike definite statement and minute analysis might, perchance, in and by themselves somewhat strongly tempt us to suppose rather close inspection of, and familiar acquaintance with, a written text than bare vague report.

The second, and more important, point of uncertainty is the question: which of the anti-suicidal arguments brought forward by Sokrates belongs or belong really to Philolaos?

Wytttenbach (ubi supra, p. 134) seems to waver on this matter, when he says on $\acute{o} \epsilon\nu \acute{\alpha}\pi. \lambda\epsilon\gamma. \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$: „significatur doctrina interior, esoterica, sive Pythagoricorum, sive Socratis.“ Ast, on the contrary, would seem to have conceived *both similes* (i. e. the one we have already spoken of, and the one we shall speak of the in next §) as equally philolaico-pythagorean, since he expressly says ¹⁾ that in this portion of the Phaeton Plato „ganz phäilolaist.“ And Heindorf, ²⁾ when commenting on the very passage of the Phaedrus in which the above quoted words „ $\varphi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu \acute{o}\iota \sigma\omicron\varphi\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\iota \eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ “ occur, says what follows. „Fallor aut respicit hic *Pythagoreorum* doctrinam ex qua ducta simili silla sententia Phaedo: $\tau\acute{o} \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\iota \chi. \tau. \lambda.$, i. e. the second simile of which we shall presently treat at some length. Böckh (ubi supra) is of the same opinion. And two reasons would suggest themselves to us as, to a certain extent, decisive evidence. a) Sokrates evidently places both similes equally in the category of $\varphi\alpha\sigma\iota$, „they say“ (vide Sokrates: $\acute{o}\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\iota — \epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\iota$, and Kebes: $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha} \tau\iota — \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\kappa\tau\iota\nu\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$): in reply to which latter question Sokrates introduces the two similes in rapid sequence, and without any perceptible separation as regards the source of their origin. b) The very manner in which Sokrates premises the second simile ($\acute{o}\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\iota \delta\iota\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha} \tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \mu\acute{\epsilon} \mu\omicron\iota \delta\omicron\kappa\alpha\iota \epsilon\upsilon \lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$) would be anything but manly and modest, and, therefore, anything but suitable to his character, if the said simile had been his own production.

¹⁾ Platon's Leben u. Schriften, 1816, p. 109. Vide, also, p. 158, note, where he refers $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\phi\acute{\omicron}\rho\eta\tau\alpha$ to the orphic arcana. ²⁾ Platonis dialogi IV, edit. 2, p. 363.

Consequently, all that Sokrates himself would seem entitled to as original limits itself, we believe, to the *development* and *application* of the second of the two similes under mention.

Nevertheless, the two similes are in spirit and purport so essentially different that we might almost, at first sight, hesitate to view them as having both originated in one and the same system of philosophy. Moreover, the second simile bears, as it were, a specifically Sokratic cast, a character so unmystical, serene, genuinely practical, and occurs so often in Plato's writings (e. g. again in *Phaedo*, in the *Laws*, in *Critias*) that, if other reasons were not paramount, we should incline to ascribe to it an origin in the fertile imagination of Sokrates himself, in the Sokratic system of thought in which the ethical elements occupy so prominent a position beside the physical and mystical ones. However, this same second simile is traceable too, if I mistake not, in the philosophems and mythologems of Pythagorism, only not, as far as I am aware, anti-suicidally applied. Thus, for instance, Iamblichus, in chapter 30 of his already quoted life of Pythagoras (pp. 126, 127 in Taylor's translation), lets the great Samian thinker and his adherents teach to the following effect: we should conceive God to exist, and to be so disposed towards the human race that he inspects and does not neglect it; we should conceive man to require an inspection of this kind, which he does not in anything think fit to resist, inasmuch as the divine nature or the divinity deserves to have the empire of the universe, and inasmuch as man was conceived to be an animal, as regards his irrational part, naturally insolent, and various, according to impulses, desires, and the rest of the passions, and, therefore, to require a transcendent inspection, and government of such kind, from which a certain castigation and order may be derived.

§. 24. SOKRATES (in the 5th cent. a. C.).

As far as I know, and am able to judge, this „fam'd Athenian“ stood and stands as *man* above all other thinkers and speakers of the ancient classical world, as one who made *himself* his „chief study“ (ἑωυτοῦ σπουδὴν), and bequeathed unto subsequent generations his own *character*, not his dicta (cf. the Pythagoric αὐτοῦ εἶπα), as his greatest work, for their elevation and imitation. This is saying enough. But some writers who shall be here nameless, fond of

historical parallels, whether to display their own acumen, or to serve some more or less individious purpose, have undertaken to draw a comparison, to enumerate the points of resemblance, between the Grecian Sage and the Hebrew Saviour, between Sokrates and Jesus. For my own part, I disrelish upon principle all so-called historical parallels in general; for it seems to me far wiser and everyway more satisfactory and instructive to endeavor to comprehend and represent any one prominent individual in his own peculiarity, to measure him by himself alone, to estimate him in relation to his times and environments, and not to strive either to heighten or to diminish his mental, moral, social stature by dragging in any other prominent individual of another age and people by way of standard of judgment. But in this particular instance the parallel attempted is the more unpalatable, because certain factious by-motives have frequently allied themselves to it. And, indeed, what should we gain for purposes of deeper insight, what should we gain except a mere schoolboy-juxta-position of externalities: that, for instance, both Sokrates and Jesus began late in life to teach, indited no theoretic system, insisted practically upon the heart and the deed, did not leave any writings, taught by speaking only, found their antagonists and enemies among the priests, rulers, tyrants, hypocrites, rabble, formed disciples who afterwards, to a greater or minor extent, separated into various schools or sects, and — were, he of Athens and he of Jerusalem, put to a violent judicial death for their convictions and confessions? — Nevertheless, since I have once begun to allude to such parallelisms, we shall do well to bear in mind here already what I shall not fail to discuss in detail at the proper season, viz. that the death of Sokrates and that of Jesus have both been, on the one hand, viewed and quoted as instances, and in defence, of suicide, and, on the other hand, as instances, and in defence, of noble and glorious self-devotion in contra-distinction to suicide.¹⁾ At all events, however, it is in no wise irreverent to affirm

¹⁾ Another parallel we might, perhaps, urge likewise, since it, too, bears upon our very topic. Plutarch (*de invidio et odio*, §. 6) informs us that some of the false accusers of Sokrates, unable to bear the contempt with which the Athenians subsequently treated them, hanged themselves: with which circumstance we may compare the well-known fate of Judas Iscariot, and also the legendary record that Pontius Pilate, remorse-stricken on account of the part he had played in condemning the guiltless Nazarene, died by his own hands (Eusebius, *H. E.* II, 7).

that the farewell-discourses of both Sokrates and Jesus to their respective disciples, as transmitted to us in the *Phaedon* and in chapters XIV—XVII of the gospel of John, are in sundry respects not unkindred, though in other respects so dissimilar: both must ever continue to shine down, like a bright, clear, pure, placid full-moon, upon this earth of ours which their ignominious and unjust deaths momentarily seemed to doom unto deeper and denser darkness. —

As we have said in the previous §, Sokrates links that which he advances against the permissibility of suicide to what Philolaos and certain others likewise (ἡδὴ δὲ καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν), Pythagoreans, too, in all probability, had already argumentatively employed to prove that it is not lawful for man to terminate his own life voluntarily. Having made the objections we have already urged and analysed to the theoretical intelligibility or practical propriety of the *Aporret* simile, he introduces, commends, infers from an altogether different figure of speech, argues and demonstrates from it the unreasonableness and unlawfulness of self-destruction; and the substance of the simile itself and of Sokrates' deduction from it is thus. The Gods are the providers for, or, the guardians over, man, i. e. there is a Divine Providence unto which man may, and ought to, trust himself. Man is the property, the slave or cattle, as it were, of the Gods, i. e. in an express relation of dependence upon, or, of subordination to, the Divinity. As, then, a human master would be angry with a slave, or, a human shepherd with a piece of cattle, that should kill himself, or itself, without command, or leave, and would, if possible, punish him, or it: in like manner, we must expect that the Divinity will be wroth against, and inflict punishment upon, a human being who slays himself without a beck, and an order, from Him.

Whilst, however, there cannot exist any doubt about the *general* inhold and scope of this simile, some few *items* in it would seem to merit and require a few passing remarks.

The mere words themselves appear to leave us the choice between conceiving the image to turn either upon a shepherd's relation to a flock, or upon a master's position to a slave. Κτήμα = τὸ πτεάνον, ἡ κτίσις, from πτάομαι, to acquire, is *property* in general; ¹⁾

¹⁾ Ast in his *lexicon Platonicum*: τὸ κτήμα, possessio; opes, bona; etiam mancipia s. servi, et in univ. res.

as also in Latin *res mancipii*, i. e. lawfully acquired property, designated equally slaves and cattle, as if both belonged to exactly the same class of possession.¹⁾ In Greek, the said word is, I believe, employed more especially in the meaning of cattle, herd, flock; at least, in Plato's writings it is manifestly often thus employed,²⁾ for instance: „they (the Gods) like shepherds reared us (man), as their possessions, flocks and herds (here *κτήματα* seems explained, as it were, by *ποιμνία* and *θρέμματα*), not, however, by forcing body against body, as shepherds in grazing drive their cattle with blows; but (they treated us) as an easily governed animal, and piloting, as it were, with persuasions as a rudder, and working on the soul, they governed the entire mortal by leading him according to their own mind.“ — Nor is this same simile by any means foreign to the diction of either the Old or the New Testament.³⁾ — Nevertheless, this interpretation, which is the one by far most usually adopted by translators and commentators, would seem to me to jar somewhat with probability and to offend good taste, inasmuch as (vide §. 14) the supposition of the self-slaughter of a piece of cattle does not appear exactly either a very appropriate or a very probable one.

If, on the other hand, we hold fast yon other less frequent, but yet not unusual, signification of the word under mention, we might, likewise, easily find objections to raise. It is true, as we shall see in the next Chapter, it was in classical antiquity, and has remained in modern times, neither an uncommon nor an inexplicable occurrence for slaves to attempt to make, or to succeed in making, their escape into liberty by running away, or by voluntarily shaking off life; and, if my memory do not at this moment deceive me, Lucian actually employs *δραπέσιον*, the derivation of *δραπέτης*, a run-away slave, in something very like the meaning of „to commit suicide.“ It is true, as we shall also learn in the next Chapter, that, as far as we are acquainted with e. g. the Roman laws on this point, they decreed punishment to a slave who had attempted his own life for the purpose of flight out of servitude. Consequently, what we had to object to the former signification of our word on the score of

¹⁾ Cf. Arnold, *Hist of Rome*, vol. I, p. 352. ²⁾ Stallbaum, edit. 3, p. 31, quotes two parallel passages from the *Leges*, lib. X, and one from *Critias*, which latter I shall give in the text in Davis' version, p. 416. ³⁾ E. g. Psalm XXIII; Isa. XL, 11; John X.

likelihood, would, as regards the latter signification, at once fall to the ground. Yet, an objection of a very different character would still remain, viz. this: there is apparently something harsh and ungenial, even, perhaps, more to the minds and feelings of the cheerful and free Greek than to those of the more austere and abject Hebrew and Oriental in general, nay, something even irreligious and untrue in supposing and representing the relation of the Godhead unto Man as identical with that between Master and Slave. Indeed, Reinhard, whose dissertation (as quoted in §. 3) is, properly speaking, only an elaborate and, we may say, a somewhat too artificially wrought out, exposition of the simile under discussion, which he conceives in the latter manner, seems to have been himself aware of something of this kind: wherefore, he believed it obligatory and needful to lay considerable stress upon certain *modifying limitations* of the notions of „dominus“ and „servus“, and thereby to remove from the first of these two words the by-notions of cruelty, arbitrariness, wantonness, and to restrict the second of them to the ideas of obedience, dependence, existence according to the will, (and for the good?), of the master. He argues, with great propriety, that e. g. the glory which Sokrates, in the subsequent portions of this very Dialogue, accords unto man by way of demonstrating the immortality of the human soul, in and by itself does away with all the humiliating, degrading, contemptuous by-notions of veritable slavery; — and I will only add, in spite of what I have previously advanced, that the New Testament itself frequently employs the generic name for slave, δούλος, which our authorized version has erroneously softened down into „servant“, to designate the relation of man unto God; at least, the Apostles invariably style themselves thus; but let us not forget that among the parting words of Jesus to his disciples we expressly read:¹⁾ „henceforth I call you not servants (δούλους) but I have called you friends“ (φίλους).

Be this enough to show that fallacies and misgivings of one sort or the other, as we already remarked in the previous §, but too easily creep into all similar comprehensive and pregnant similes; — and we now pass on to sketch the not by any means uninteresting or unimportant *external history* of the argument at issue, in

¹⁾ John XV, 15.

the course of which sketch sundry points we have hitherto purposely remained silent about, will urge themselves upon our notice.

I. Ancient pagan expositors.

The Neo Platonist Olympiodoros¹⁾ considers the prohibition of suicide enunciated by Sokrates essentially modified by two circumstances, rendered, as it were, thereby relative instead of absolute.

„Olympiodorus vult id (viz. sibi manus inferre) aliquando posse permitti. Ad id vero convincendum adducit in medium verba quaedam Socratis in Phaedone. Primum quidem, quod inquit: Philosophus vim sibi forte non inferet: ubi hoc ipsum forte dixit, suspicionem reliquisse videtur, id quandoque licere. Deinde quod subjunxit hunc in modum: Philosophi non debent sibi mortem consciscere, nisi Deus ingentem necessitatem invexerit, qualem mihi in praesentia intulit. Quasi dicat: Philosophus in simili quadam constitutus necessitate jure se inde obitu potest eximere.“ The two points here involved we will now discuss separately.

1. Olympiodor believes Sokrates' denunciation of suicide rendered relative by the adverb ἰσως (he translates it by „forte“), which he employs at the conclusion of his argumentation against the permissibility of suicide: ἰσως τοίνυν ταύτη οὐκ ἄλογον, μὴ πρότερον αὐτὸν ἀποκτανόναι δεῖν, κ. τ. λ. No doubt, ἰσως often has the meaning of *perchance*, *haply*, and may then even be directly opposed to ὄντως, *really*, e. g. οὐχ ἰσως, ἀλλ' ὄντως. But it has, doubtless, likewise sometimes the meaning of *certainly*, *verily*, *indisputably*. In a case of uncertainty, the context alone would, I presume, have to decide, unless, perhaps, the mood of the verb should throw considerable weight into the balance. In general, however, nothing can be more delusive and misleading as well as more pedantic and hyper-critical than absolute positiveness about the exact import and power of Greek particles, or, indeed, of particles in any language whatsoever. Subtle

¹⁾ The biographical Dictionaries of Krug, Rose, Smith s. v. are far less satisfactory in their accounts of this philosopher, who flourished in the first half of the 6th cent. p. C., than Pauly's already quoted *Real-Encyclopädie*, B. V, pp. 922, 923, where we are informed that this celebrated teacher of philosophy at Alexandria composed commentaries on many of Plato's Dialogues, which are at the same time independent expositions in the spirit of Neo Platonism. We have here to deal only with his commentary on Phaedo which has been completely published by Finch, 1827. My quotations, however, will be made from the argumentum of Marsilius Ficinus to the ninth book of the first Ennead of Plotinus, of which we shall have to speak repeatedly on later occasions.

distinctions no less than stubborn assertions in matters of this description often defeat their own purpose by merely engendering skepticism and evoking contradiction, as every scrupulous student of the New Testament, in many passages of which Greek particles enact so important a part, cannot fail to have discovered ad nauseam. That German particle, for instance, which most readily and most completely corresponds with ἵνα is *wol* or *wohl*; and what German scholar is not aware of the very varied senses and forces in which it undeniably is employed? However, besides the fact that ἵνα may embody *emphatic* as well as limiting import, we incline, for the following threefold reason, to object to the validity of the restriction proposed and urged by Olympiodor. a. We must not lose sight of that almost ironically modest manner in which Sokrates was wont to express his real sentiments and opinions. We have already spoken of this matter in the previous §, and will here only state that ἵνα is a very frequent word on his lips. b. Let us not forget that at all times the manifest tenor of an entire argumentation ought to be allowed to outweigh and overwhelm the signification of a mere doubtful particle. c. Kebes' emphatically consenting reply (πανυ γα) to Sokrates' immediately preceding interrogation would seem to insinuate that he, for whose instruction the whole discussion more expressly took place, had become quite convinced of the conclusiveness of his teacher's anti-suicidal argument.

2. Olympiodor believes Sokrates' denunciation of suicide rendered relative by the clause which follows immediately upon the previously quoted ἵνα — δεῖν, viz. πρὶν ἀνάγκην τινὰ ὃ θεὸς ἐπιτέμψῃ, ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν οὖν παροῦσαν ἡμῖν. — In every land and age, the mentally and morally dark have hated, and continue to hate, the bringers and bearers of light; and, though it be sad, it is not, therefore, strange, that a Magistracy, blinded by a godless creed of „laissez-aller“, and armed with political power, should have believed it to be a duty, or, have considered it expedient, to preserve the popular creed and customs even at the expense of truth and holiness. We know that the so-called negative and subversive dogmatical and ethical teachings of Sokrates displeased the Athenians as a body, but that he himself, rightly deeming his negations and subversions warrantable and divine, although illegal and unpopular, objected to the verdict of his judges, declined to pronounce any judgment upon himself, or to crave mercy or pardon from those

in whose hands his fate lay; and that he was, therefore, condemned to empty the poison-chalice, nor unjustly so, if we keep in sight the lower and more external standing-point of his antagonists. We know, also, that he might, nevertheless, by flight have escaped from death, but that considerations neither for his friends, nor for his children, nor for himself could induce him to adopt a measure which appeared to him, and justly so, a violation of his word, a wrong to the laws of his country.¹⁾ Therefore, he cheerfully awaited the *appointed* hour, and willingly adopted the *prescribed* means, for death. And such a procedure has, surely, nothing whatsoever in common with suicide proper (§. 10): wherefore, for instance, it was a work of supererogation, when Stäudlin (pp. 26—29 of the Treatise quoted in the Preface) troubled himself seriously and lengthily to examine, whether (he leans more especially upon Xenophon's Apology) Sokrates was, or was not, a veritable suicide.²⁾ Consequently, if Sokrates considered the said magisterial command of self-execution the *only* divine hint which could justify self-destruction, he, indubitably, meant to represent, and has represented, suicide *per se* as altogether unjustifiable; for, as we shall learn in the sequel, his interpretation and specification of the Divine Necessity or Summons of the Deity must not be confounded with, since they are essentially different from, those of the Stoic School, or of the New Academy, as far, at least, as the latter is personified in Cicero.

II. Patristic expositors.

The most celebrated case of suicide in classical antiquity, that of Cato the Utican, and the most curious one, that of Kleombrotos the Ambraciote, attach themselves more or less closely to this „swan-song“ of the dying Sage of Athens; and we are bound to make mention of them here, because the churchfathers Lactantius and Augustine have given their verdicts upon the *practical* effects of the ethico-religious treatment of suicide in our Dialogue in immediate connexion with an allusion to the said two cases.

¹⁾ Vide the Platonic Dialogues Kriton and the Apology of Sokrates. Cf. also Maximus Tyrius, Diss. XXVI, and sundry other dissertations of his; but in Diss. XXXIV, §. 10, he seems to contradict himself. ²⁾ Even a Seneca (ep. 70) and a Valerius Maximus (lib. VII, 11, 1) viewed the fact that Sokrates waited, patiently and calmly, all the long time which had legally to elapse between his condemnation and his self-execution as a decisive practical proof of his disapprobation of suicide. Less wisely Cicero judged (T. Q. I, 30), as we shall see on a later occasion.

Lactantius (as quoted in §. 3) did not hesitate to charge the guilt of their self-slaughter upon the very teachings of Sokrates. „Quod si scisset Plato, ac docuisset, a quo, et quomodo, et quibus, et quae ob facta, et quo tempore immortalitas tribuatur, *nec Cleombrotum inpegiisset in mortem voluntariam, nec Catonem*, sed eos ad vitam, et ad justitiam, potius erudisset.“ The extreme illiberality and ignorance in which such an opinion originated will, I believe, become sufficiently manifest, if we look into the details of the matter.

Pretty much all of what we know about the cause and manner of Cleombrotus' suicide is recounted, briefly and graphically, in the following *satirical* epigram of the Greek lyrist's Kallimachos who flourished in the 3rd cent. a. C. I will quote it in Merivale's English, somewhat rhetorical and bombastie, rhymed version.¹⁾

„O sun, farewell! — from the tall rampart's height,
Cleombrotus, reclining, plung'd to night!
Nor wasting care, nor fortune's adverse strife
Chill'd his young hopes with weariness of life;
But Plato's godlike page had fixed his eye,
And made him long for immortality.“²⁾

It is, of course, difficult to extract any clear and valid insight into the instance before us from suchlike scanty historical materials, and we, therefore, find ourselves left to argue upon mere probabilities. If an irresistible eagerness to bathe in the ocean of immortal life seized upon Cleombrotus, after he had contemplated that image of the Blessed which the pencil of Plato, guided by the revealings of Sokrates, had sketched on the pages of Phaedo, we must, I presume, conceive him to have been an enthusiastic and — to use a modern fashionable slang-term — a religious, rather than a reflective and matured, person, whether young or old. He simply had not rightly understood the distinction which Sokrates so broadly draws in this very Dialogue between the philosophic death and actual self-destruction. Who among us that has mingled much and intimately with devotionally disposed people, has not known, more especially, young persons so sensitively and excitably organized, and so one-

¹⁾ Collections from the Greek Anthology, 1833, p. 180. ²⁾ The very simple words of this same epigr. XXIV which chiefly concern us here are in the original: ἀλλὰ Πλάτωνος ἐν τῷ περὶ ψυχῆς γραμμ' ἀναλεξάμενος. Vide Blomfield's notae, p. 150, in his edition of Callimachi quae supersunt, 1815, on other narratives, not essentially dissimilar, of the same event, e. g. Cicero's in T. Q. I, 34.

sidedly educated, that they, after having convinced themselves by reading with more of intense ardor than of calm sobriety in some parts of the New Testament, e. g. the Apocalypse, or in other kindred dreamy and visionary works, e. g. methodistical tracts, that the lot of the God-loving soul is unspeakably blissful and glorious in the mansions of Eternity, — often felt anxious and tempted to wing their flight prematurely thitherward? Similarly Fable and Poetry tell us of those who, having gazed long, intently, languishingly into the crystal waters of a warm, blue stream, at last, sank into its mystic depths, partially, as if lured and drawn by mermaid-voice and mermaid-arm, and, partially, of their own free will and choice.¹⁾ Cf. e. g. the case of André mentioned in §. 23; and vide what we shall have to state in a later Section about such strong and ardent love and faith among some of the early christians as were nourished and cherished until they became a magnetic power which drew towards, and even into, suicide.

That, however, the case of Cleombrotus should have been a source of wonderment, and even a subject for satire, to the ancient Greeks and Romans, is a fact easily accounted for. We have already (§. 3) said that the notion and feeling of Immortality were, in general, not by any means a powerful motive for action among the classical ancients, and have likewise (§. 17) seen that their perceptions and anticipations of a future life were, upon the whole, anything but cheering or enticing. The Earth with its recognized beauties, its experienced enjoyments, its ascertained obligations, its accustomed performances, was of more value and interest in their sight than Elysium with its far-off chances and its imperfectly realized felicities.

But, — and this is the sole question we have now to deal with —, there was so little in the Phaedo itself to warrant Cleombrotos' rash plunge, that even Lactantius' far more acute and vigorous cotemporary brother-churchfather Augustinus writes on this very subject as follows.²⁾ „Quod tamen magne potius factum esse quam bene, testis ei potuit esse *Plato ipse, quem legerat*, qui profecto id praecipue potissimumque fecisset, vel etiam praecepisset, nisi ea mente qua immortalitatem animae vidit, nequaquam faciendum, quin

¹⁾ Vide Goethe's beautiful ballad „der Fischer“, which some, but erroneously, have declared to have been composed on the self-wrought death of Gräfin von Lepzig, on whom cf. §. 21. ²⁾ De civit. Dei, lib. I, c. 22.

etiam prohibendum esse judicasset.“ Yea, even so, and, perchance, still more. How could the Phaëdon, if rationally perused, and rightly comprehended, by any possibility lead anybody to the commission of any sort of suicide? Not only does it contain those unequivocal anti-suicidal arguments which we have already looked into and commented upon, but, not content with such direct denial of man's right to slay himself, or with the dictum that the philosopher, though he must long for death, may, nevertheless, „not be a benefactor unto himself by self-destruction, but shall wait for another benefactor“, i. e. God, or, natural death, — Sokrates, towards the conclusion of his immortal discourse, gives utterance, brief, simple, clear, forcible, to the deeply beautiful and thoroughly practical sentiment that man must adorn his soul with „temperance, justice, valor, nobleness, and truth, and so doing await his passage into Hades, as one who will enter upon it whenever Destiny (ἡ εὐμαρμένη) shall call.“

Yet, on all these weighty and decisive elements of our Dialogue Lactantius observes silence, and by such silence would fain — negatively, at least — induce his readers to assume that in the Phaëdon no dogmatically satisfactory and vitally impressive allusion is made to the *conditions* of a happy state of future existence, to a rational and an ethical *preparation* for a just and wise entrance into immortal life, — not to speak of the emphatic declaration of the absolute wrong of suicide therein contained. How one-sided, unfair, truthless, and, therefore, contemptible! Would this christian preceptor of the unfortunate Crispus, Constantine's son, have considered himself justified in suchlike wilful suppression and malignant innuendoes, if he had been arguing upon, or from, any book of the New Testament? I think not! Moreover, such non-admission of the validity or, rather, such non-mention of the existence, of the Sokratic arguments against suicide and the Sokratic statements of the conditions of a blissful immortality, come with redoubled bad grace from this same churchfather who, when himself arguing against the lawfulness of self-destruction, verily — as we shall see in a later Section —, does very little else than reproduce, in his much-lauded classical Latinity, the sentiments and similes of Sokrates.

We now proceed to the better known and also far more important case of Cato of Utica. Of course, I need not here recount from the pages of Seneca, Plutarch, Appian, Dio Cassius &c. either the outlines or details of Cato's self-inflicted death, since every

schoolboy is already sufficiently well acquainted with them; nor need I offer any opinion of my own about the merits or demerits, the strength or weakness, wisdom or folly of his voluntary and violent end, since dozens of writers have discussed this matter to and fro from Alpha to Omega, and still no unanimous verdict has been, or is likely ever to be, come to. Moreover, we have more than once (§§. 4, 9, 13) touched upon the matter, and shall have to recur to it, before we finish this very Chapter. The only point now at issue is the circumstance that Cato perused the *Phaedon* once, or, perhaps, even twice, whilst the deadly weapon was lying in yon fateful and mournful night unsheathed by his side; for the verdict of Lactantius calls upon us to judge of the influence which the work under mention probably exercised upon his fatal resolution. We, then, venture upon the few following simple suggestions. Cato was not a follower of Sokrates' or Plato's, but, like most of his most illustrious and most noble-minded cotemporary fellow-countrymen, a professed Stoic; even if, however, he had been a Platonist, he was surely of too severe, stern, and independent a nature, and at too matured a period of life, to be in the least likely to become swayed by the perusal of any particular book whatsoever to so decisive an extent. Thence, for instance, Cicero who knew him well, represents his suicide as a natural and necessary consequence of his *peculiar character*, and does not trouble himself to utter a single syllable about his having perused *Phaedo*.¹⁾ Indeed, so little was the perusal of the *Phaedon* instrumental in inciting him to the commission of suicide that, several days prior to the actual deed, he had already made up his mind to destroy himself, and had spoken openly of this his intention: so that Dion Cassius²⁾ leaves us the choice between believing that he had *Phaedo* given to him „*either to remove from his relatives and friends all suspicion of his intention and thus to be the less watched*, or to draw from the perusal of it reasons of consolation in regard to death.“ Who, however, has assured us, or can convince us, that the *Phaedonic* arguments had been successful in working faith in him whose tempest-soul was about to rush hence? Who may venture to affirm that Cato did not slay himself under the impression that, after all, the soul is *not* immortal? And, at all events, it would be quite as fair

¹⁾ De Off. I, c. 31. ²⁾ Lib. 43, c. 11.

a presumption as that of Lactantius', nay, haply, a fairer one, that Cato actually destroyed himself, because he did *not* believe in the results of Sokrates' reasonings.

Whoso, however, should incline to view the very fact that Phaedo did not prevent Cato from committing suicide as an argument against this Dialogue, him we must be allowed to remind of the undeniable fact that many a christian suicide has employed his last moments upon the perusal of some portion of the Bible, and has left some trace of this circumstance by the side of the instrument with which he perpetrated the unholy deed. Inspect, for instance, the daily newspapers: they afford ample evidence! But, two or three well-authenticated examples I will now relate. A certain Dr. Gnilius wrote upon a piece of paper the passage¹⁾ „the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous“ — and cut his throat. In the year 1819, an old man, having left behind him a piece of paper on which were inscribed the words²⁾ „Jesus Christ has said that a tree which is old and can no longer bear fruit, must be hewn down“, hanged himself. When Carl von Hohenhausen (vide p. 38 of the already quoted work) shot himself in his bed at midnight, an open Greek New Testament was found on his bed beside the pistol: on which circumstance a lady-writer (ibid. p. 238) makes the following somewhat twaddling comment. „Nachdem das Schrecklichste geschehen, und man nach der verhängnisvollen Stunde den entseelten Jüngling in seinem Blute fand, lag neben dem Pistol auch das neue Testament in seiner Ursprache, gleichsam als habe er noch im letzten Augenblicke geforscht, ob ihn dieser gewaltsame Schritt nicht von dem Herzen des Allvaters entferne; und so bis zum letzten Augenblicke kämpfte er mit der allmächtigen Stimme des Glaubens in seinem Innern.“ — But, did the N. T. *impel* him to, or even permit to him, self-destruction?

However, more than this. Classical antiquity has preserved, as well as the instances of Kleombrotos and Cato, two other examples which go a great way to prove the *very opposite* of what Lactantius was anxious to establish, to prove that a tranquil and an unbiassed perusal of Phaedo could scarcely fail rather to have the effect of *preventing* suicide.

¹⁾ Psalm 146, 8. ²⁾ Matth. III, 10.

The already mentioned Olympiodoros himself assures us that he had contemplated suicide, but had been dissuaded and withheld from committing it by the perusal of Phaedo.¹⁾ And Libanius, the celebrated rhetorician of Antioch, the teacher of Chrysostomos and the friend of Julian the Apostate, writes, when speaking of himself in reference to the unexpected death of his Imperial patron, as follows.²⁾ „This intelligence was a stroke that pierced me to the heart. I cast my eyes on a sword; and wished to rid myself of a life that would henceforth be more cruel to me than death. But I recollected the prohibition of Plato, and the punishments reserved in Hades for those who dispose of themselves without waiting for the command of God.“³⁾

III. Modern expositors.

As the most pains-taking and subtle advocate of this Phaedonic passage, we must, I believe, regard Reinhard, whose dissertation we have already twice referred to. He divides the Sokratic argument into two main parts: God „curat res humanas“; men are „Dei servi“: from the former of these axioms he, then, extracts three, and from the latter four, inferential anti-suicidal arguments, like so many branches, growing forth from the said twofold trunk. The result he arrives at is to the effect that the argumentation before us is „et perspicua, et, accuratius si examinetur, verissima“, and that Sokrates the Heathen had seen „acute“ and demonstrated „accurate“ what has become to many Christian philosophers „res incerta et ambigua.“

The most potent antagonist, on the contrary, to this same Phaedonic passage J. J. Rousseau (as quoted in §. 21) may, perhaps, be pronounced; for, whilst he lets Saint Preux admit that it is the strongest and wisest anti-suicidal argument which can be had recourse to, and, indeed, the only one (?) which even the Christians ever employed, he condemns en masse its validity and applicability, opposes, for instance, to the simile touching flight *from* the Master's service the peculiar assertion that suicide is, rather, escape *into* more intimate connexion with the Deity, into increased ability to

¹⁾ Vide Taylor's introductory remark to his translation of Phaedo, Works of Plato, vol. IV, p. 247. ²⁾ De la Bletterie, l'histoire de Jovien, 1748, in the English version. ³⁾ „Besides I reflected that I owed that hero a funeral oration“, Libanius adds somewhat naively, and almost ludicrously, after the passage to have just quoted: no bad exemplification, forsooth, of the well-known rhetorical figure of — sinking!

serve Him, and thinks that the very fact that Cato of Utica read it through, and, nevertheless, slew himself immediately afterwards, proves its untenability.

Frederick von Schlegel, finally, when lecturing on ancient literature, actually, even he who had once penned the *Lucinde*, stops for a moment¹⁾ to express his admiration of, and assent to, this Phaedonic passage of ours, and states that it proclaims suicide „*einem Frevel gegen sich selbst und gegen Gott*“, and that Sokrates, among all philosophers, taught the absolute unpermissibility of suicide „most decidedly.“ Surely, however, man's relation unto himself is, strictly speaking, not urged at all in the simile under mention, but only his relation unto God; and it would, I ween, have been truer, if Schlegel had substituted *most clearly* for „most decidedly“ (vide what has been said of Pythagorism in §. 23).

§. 25. PLATO (in the 5th cent. a. C.).

This greatest, perhaps, of Pagan dialectical thinkers and mystical poets, though not himself, as he informs us, present at his revered teacher's farewell-conversation, of which the previous § treated, but to whom one of those who heard it had communicated its import, has recorded it for the consolation and instruction of latest posterity. The very circumstance, however, that we owe to Plato's pen the transmission of Sokrates' last discourse with his faithfully attached and sincerely mourning disciples concerning Life, Death, Immortality, has led sundry ancient, and many modern, writers to confuse, as I think, Plato with Sokrates, and, limiting ourselves to our immediate topic, to assign to Plato, simply because it is he who has stated Sokrates' arguments and precepts against suicide, a foremost place in the ranks of unconditionally anti-suicidal philosophers.

Servius' testimony to this effect we have already quoted in §. 17; the testimony of Libanius we spoke of in the last §; and to these we will now, first of all, add that of Appulejus. This non-Alexandrine neo-platonist, who lived in the 2nd cent. p. C., and whose career was as chequered as his literary fame was considerable in his own day, wrote three books on the life and philosophy of Plato (*de dogmate Platonis*), in the *second* of which — it treats of Pla-

¹⁾ *Sämmtliche Werke*, B., I, p. 74.

to's philosophia moralis, and alone concerns us here — there occur several passages that have an anti-suicidal import or tendency (e. g. „qua quidem naturae lege — se conditioni conciliat“, and „philosophum oportet — consuetudinemque moriendi“); but the main passage of this kind (c. 23) is as follows.¹⁾ „Sapientem quippe pedissequum et imitatore[m] Dei dicimus et sequi arbitramur Deum. Id est enim ἑκ του Θεῷ (This is, by the by, an originally Pythagorean watch-word). Non solum autem oportet, dum vitam colit, digna diis dicere, nec ea agere quae horum majestati displiceant, verum et tunc cum corpus relinquit; *quod non faciet invito deo*. Nam etsi in ejus manu est mortis facultas, quamvis sciat se terrenis relictis consecuturum esse meliora, nisi necessario perpetiendum esse istud illa lex divina decreverit, accersire sibi tamen eum mortem non debere et si anteactae vitae ornamenta cohonestant, honestiorem tamen et rumoris secundi oportet esse, cum securus de posteritatis suae vita ad immortalitatem animam permittit ire: eam, quod pie vixerit, praecipit fortunatorum habituram loca, Deorum choreis semideumque permixtam.“

All these testimonies, now, seem to me to refer simply and solely to the Phaedo, which dialogue, by the by, Appulejus had translated into Latin, as, indeed, Lactantius and Augustinus, as quoted in §. 24, evidently refer the contents of Phaedo to Plato; and Macrobius, a Latin grammarian of the 5th cent. p. C., about whom nothing definite seems known, and whom some suppose to have been a Greek by birth, ascribes the anti-suicidal arguments of the Phaedo to Plato in the most pointed manner.²⁾ „Haec secta et praeceptio (i. e. Cicero's prohibition of suicide) *Platonis* est, qui in *Phaedone* definit homini non esse sua sponte moriendum. sed in eodem tamen dialogo *idem* dicit“ &c. And he, unlike Olympiodorus in this respect, conceives and declares (ibid. p. 69) the said Phaedonic argument to be *absolutely* anti-suicidal. „Illam (i. e. physical death) vero, quam omnibus natura constituit, cogi, vel inferri vel accersiri vetat, docens expectandam esse naturam.“

Perhaps, we might experience some difficulty in separating in the Phaedo what may have been Plato's from what really did belong to Sokrates. If we were to take *memory* alone into conside-

¹⁾ Opera omnia, edid. Hildebrand, vol. II, pp. 250, 251. ²⁾ Commentariorum in somnium Scipionis a Cicerone descriptum libb. II, lib. I, c. 13, p. 68 in the Leyden edit. of 1670.

ration, we might hesitate somewhat to believe that we have before us a *perfectly faithful* transcript of what Sokrates said on yon memorable occasion; yet, who would, on the mere ground of memory, like to deny to Plato's Apology of Sokrates which he, Plato, had, nevertheless, only listened to, whilst Sokrates spoke it, *essential fidelity*? For, let us not forget that the ancients, from causes I need not here specify, possessed, in general, far more accurate and tenacious memories than we moderns, and that we have every reason to suppose that Plato was anything but deficient in this particular. Such a separation would seem to be rendered still more difficult by the circumstance that Plato, prompted by gratitude for the instructions, reverence for the memory, of his departed teacher, and by, perchance, the popular faith which attached to the name and character of Sokrates an unusual measure of interest and significance, made Sokrates a phantom-speaker, nay, the chief interlocutor in (almost?) all his Dialogues: just as in that species of modern literature which we call „Imaginary Conversations“ the author himself often masks himself behind the name of the leading and victorious spokesman. — There is, however, one large and great work of Plato's, in which Sokrates does not appear at all, and in which Plato, probably, means himself by „the aged Athenian Stranger“ who is the only person of real note in the said work. I allude „to the Laws“ (νόμοι, leges). In this very work, now, Plato expresses at greater length and with more distinctness than in any other composition of his what we believe to have been *his own* sentiments on suicide, and, if we look at these sentiments, we must draw one of the following three inferences: Plato either never intended those principles which are laid down on the same topic in the Phaedo to be his own, but those of Sokrates simply and solely; or, he ignored and disavowed them at a more advanced and matured period of his life, inasmuch as „the Laws“ were his last literary performance; or, finally, the said Laws were not composed by Plato at all.

For my own part, I unhesitatingly incline to draw the first of these three conclusions. But, if anybody should prefer saying that compositions proceeding from one so fervent, vigorous, comprehensive, eloquent and imaginative as Plato was, and originating at a considerable chronological distance from each other, can scarcely be expected to exhibit exactly the same results, or to strike exactly

the same chord, inasmuch as every nature in which there is much to be developed is, of necessity, as it progresses, and because it progresses, or the contrary, subject to variations, modifications, inconsistencies, self-contradictions: — I could not deny so unquestionable a fact in general, and might point to the modern Plato, Schelling's earliest and latest publications as a striking illustration; but the onus of the proof with specific reference to Plato would have to fall to the said anybody's lot. Inasmuch, however, as the third conclusion really has been drawn, though without any reference to the specific point we are engaged upon (for none of the belligerent parties, as far as I am aware, even touch upon our item), by such a scholar as the late Friedrich Ast, we ought not to avoid looking at it more closely.

His already quoted *Platon's Leben und Schriften* bears on the title-page the following somewhat high-sounding and ominous words: „ein Versuch, im Leben wie in den Schriften des Platon das Wahre und Rechte vom Erbildeten und Untergetriebenen zu scheiden, und die Zeitfolge der ächten Gespräche zu bestimmen“; and, opening the book itself, we find thirteen pages¹⁾ devoted to the proof that the *Nóμoi* have been *erroneously* considered a genuine work of Plato's. Ast's reasons for this bold critical hypothesis are, partly, the contents of the *Leges*, as compared with the *Politia*, e. g. various (real or apparent) contradictions and inconsistencies; partly, the minor measure of clear freshness and dialectical skill in the tone and spirit of the *leges*, as compared with the *politia*; partly, the absence of platonic transparency and ease of style; partly, the circumstances that the speakers are fictitious or unknown persons, and not dramatically characterized; and, finally, sundry external points: all of which things in their presumed collective force induced him to believe, despite the opposite testimonies of Aristoteles, Cicero, Plutarch, &c., that the *Nóμoi* were composed and published, without even the assistance or guidance of MSS or notes of Plato's, after his death by some pupil of his, e. g. Xenokrates or Philippos, as a Supplement to the *Politia*. So far he.

If it be, on the one hand, manifestly undeniable that every great mind naturally gathers cotemporaneous disciples around it who, as it were, „magnetized“ by its vital potencies are, whether wittingly or

¹⁾ pp. 379—392.

unwittingly, attracted into imitating and continuing its peculiar efficacy and revelation, so that, *after a lapse of many ages*, it may be almost next to impossible to distinguish with certainty between the work of the master's own hand and the work conceived and executed only more or less in the spirit and form of the school that master founded (let some of the pictures of the Plato among artists, Raphael, serve as a pertinent example): the *cotemporaneous* testimony of Aristoteles in and by itself would, on the other hand, seem to form a powerful antagonist to Ast's deductions, howsoever much he might choose to disregard it; and, though I cannot but feel myself utterly incompetent to investigate the question at issue, I may confess that Ast's arguments, one and all, appeared to me, on the very first perusal, unnaturally constrained and anything but conclusive. Friedrich Thiersch, however, a greater authority in such matters than even Ast, in a review of the said work ¹⁾ has devoted half a dozen pages to the refutation and nullification of Ast's reasons step by step, and, as the result of his own views, pronounces the *Leges* „one of those works of antiquity which distinguishes itself pre-eminently by the wisdom and wealth of its contents, forms a worthy conclusion of the brilliant series of Platonic writings, and is a composition in which Plato stepped, not until the evening of his life, out of the territory of speculation into reality, and unfolded what he regarded as realizable for the weal of society.“ I will only add that Schoell ²⁾ makes common cause with Thiersch, and informs us that Stallbaum also is of the same opinion, which, by the by, the writer of the article on Plato in Smith's Classical Dictionary ³⁾ likewise advocates, or, rather, adopts.

But it is time to let Plato speak for himself on the topic of suicide which he approaches and discusses in these same *Leges* ⁴⁾ as *legislator* apparently, but really as moralist, inasmuch as his laws are more or less speculative and ideal, i. e. the offerings of his subtle dialectics and metaphysics to a Utopian State.

Τὸν δὲ δὴ πάντων, οἰκειότατον καὶ λεγόμενον φίλτατον ὃς ἂν ἀποκτείνῃ, τί χρὴ πάσχειν; λέγω δὲ, ὃς ἂν ἑαυτὸν κτείνῃ, τὴν τῆς εἰμαρμένης βίαν ἀποστερῶν μοῖραν. — With these weighty and solemn words, he puts the question, whether suicide be culpable, and ought to be

¹⁾ *Jahrbücher der Literatur*, Wien, 1818, pp. 63—70. ²⁾ *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur*, Bd. I, pp. 504—506. ³⁾ Vol. III, p. 397. ⁴⁾ *De Legibus*, lib. IX, c. 12, p. 358 in Ast's edition, 1814.

punished by the State. These very words themselves, however, may be said to place the entire question of the morality or immorality of self-destruction upon a standing-point different from that which it occupies in the dicta of Pythagoras, or Philolaos, and of Sokrates. Whereas, namely, those thinkers based the unlawfulness of suicide chiefly, if not solely, upon man's position to the *Godhead*, Plato, on the contrary, views the entire subject, firstly and mainly, from what we might, perhaps, call a more human, and, consequently, in a manner a lower, point of sight, viz. that of *Self*. Man's earthly life is man's „dearest friend“, ¹⁾ whose improvement, and also enjoyment, he is bound to attend to most sedulously, as long as he finds it possible, or convenient, to do so. Still further, however, than the mere form of the interrogation itself does the substance of the answer which the questioner himself gives, remove him from Pythagorism and Sokrates in regard to the theme we are discussing. *Three* kinds of suicide, i. e. suicide from three different causes or motives, are, according to the continuation of the passage now before us, not criminal, or, at least, ought not, and are not, to be dealt with penally.

a. If the State adjudge self-execution as a punishment (πόλεως ταξάσης ὄκνην). In this matter, Plato simply agrees with what Sokrates utters in the *Phaedon*; and we have already hinted (in §§. 10, 24), and there endeavored to prove, that obedience to a legal and magisterial injunction of such sort is quite improperly pressed into the service of the topic of real suicide at all.

b. If a person be surprised (impelled) by a fate which causes very great pain, and which cannot be fled from (περιωδύνῃ καὶ ἀφύκτῳ προσπεσούσῃ τύχῃ ἀναγκασθεὶς). He means, I presume, an incurable disease of one sort or the other. Vide, however, what has been discussed at some length already in §. 13.

c. If some inextricable and intolerable (impoverishing) disgrace should have befallen a person (αἰσχύνῃς τινὸς ἀπόρου καὶ ἀβίου μεταλαχών). This motive or cause is, of course, still more comprehensive and vague than the former one, since any extremely sensitive or very ambitious individual might easily seize upon what is here rather alluded to than specified.

¹⁾ I may in passing recal to the reader's recollection a similar comparison between the rejection of a generous friend and the ejection of life, the highest good, which Sophokles places upon the lips of Kreon, Oedipus Rex, lines 605, 606.

Hereupon, Plato specifies *two* sorts of suicide which are, in his estimation, culpable and ought, therefore, to be punished by the State in a manner most indignant and ignominious.

a. If committed from idleness (*ἀργία*). — But, what is this *ἀργία* exactly, i. e. what notion must Plato be supposed to have attached to it here? The matter seems to me to remain somewhat uncertain and obscure, howsoever carefully we may examine into it; for the mere word itself has sundry shades of meaning, as any Dictionary will suffice to show. My own impression is that our philosopher did not mean this term to convey any *specific* cause whatsoever, but, rather, just the *absence*, if I may thus express myself, of every specific motive, i. e. a sort of listlessness to live, a kind of indefinable life-weariness from sheer inactivity; consequently, something very much akin to what the Stoics and Roman Civilians called *taedium vitae*, and to what has in modern parlance been styled *spleen*, *ennui*, *Lebensüberdruß* (vide §. 13). The Roman Civilians, in their utter indifference to Ethics, as far as our topic was concerned, pronounced such *ἀργία* to render suicide innocent, as we shall see in the next Chapter; the Stoics, on the contrary, whose system inculcated heroic virtues, and aimed at forming strong characters, knew well that *ἀργία*, in this our acceptation, is often a consequence of mere self-indulgence, worthless weakness, vice, and therefore, though otherwise so favorable to self-destruction, more or less agreed, as we shall learn in the sequel, with our philosopher in viewing it as neither a sufficient nor a laudable motive for suicide. In the 17th and 18th centuries in England, and in the 19th century in almost all the larger European cities, some suchlike *ἀργία* was, and remains, a very prevalent actuating cause of self-destruction, especially among the higher, wealthier, more luxurious and dissipated classes of society. The Divinity, if we conceive it at all, must be conceived as a God of Work, Order, Animation, and whosoever, imitating Him, creates for, and sustains within, himself the love, habit, necessity of making life a series of daily tasks, healthful performances, elevating and beneficent duties, is not likely to become a prey to the said *ἀργία* which is a fruit and the filth of spiritual stagnation, moral lethargy, inward death. The lower orders, therefore, who *must* and *do* labor, who have an object to pursue, and toil in the pursuit thereof, a legitimate and useful object, howsoever humble and simple it may chance to be, rarely become victims to

this same ἀργία: thus do the heath-flower and mountain-shrub thrive freshly, vigorously, fragrantly, and smilingly beneath the vitalizing influence of storm, rain and sunshine, whilst the over-nursed, pampered hot-house plant often pines, languishes, withers, decays, and prematurely dies. Neither unreasonably nor uncharitably, therefore, as it seems to me, did Plato visit suicide from ἀργία with bitterest sarcasm and ignominious doom.

b. If committed from unmanly cowardice (ἀνανδρίας δουλία). — The almost tautological emphasis of this expression, however, does not render its import and drift less puzzling to us in regard to our topic. We know that ἀνδρεία is, according to Plato, as well as according to Aristoteles, the Stoics, the New Academicians, one of the cardinal virtues, and its very etymology¹⁾ seems to pronounce it something more significant and comprehensive than any correspondent modern word of ours, e. g. manliness, manfulness, manhood, conveys. We know, too, that Plato's entire theory of Education and the Drama was directed towards upholding and cherishing perfect fearlessness of death in preference and opposition to servitude or captivity, to weakly sympathy or sickly sentimentality, and that a considerable portion of several of his works²⁾ is devoted to the analysis and enforcement of this same virtue of manhood. It is, also, clear that much of what we devout or devotional Christians now-a-days call piety, godliness, virtue would be *anything but* synonymous with what Plato and the Ancients in general denominated ἀνδρεία, though we should employ the identical term.³⁾ In a word, what we term „personal courage“ is *less* than ἀνδρεία, and what we understand by „moral courage“ is *more* than ἀνδρεία. At all events, we do not, and cannot, apply the *same* ethical standard to the same notional expression. And, as it is with ἀνδρεία, so it is too, of course, with its opposites, ἀνανδρία, δουλία. Thence, if we place suicide under the head of cowardice at all, we should most assuredly consider that, if committed from the two previously discussed motives, viz. that of *disease* and that of *disgrace*, it would have to be declared an effect of cowardice. Nevertheless, Plato by expressly excepting the said two motives as *exculpatory*, manifestly

¹⁾ Ἄνθρωπος, man, is, of course, its radix, as vir is that of the more or less synonymous Latin virtus (vide, however, ἀρετή from Ἀρετή); similarly, valor was literally what gave *value*, and fortitude literally what manifested *strength*.

²⁾ Vide e. g. de Rep. lib. IV, p. 183, and Laches, c. 25. ³⁾ E. g. St. Paul's derivative verb ἀνδρίζεσθαι, to acquit one's self like a man, 1 Cor. XVI, 13.

conceives ἀνανδρία, δαλία here not in general as a succumbing to fate, instead of opposing it, but, rather, as something *quite specific*; and, indeed, I am quite at a loss to imagine what he can possibly mean by ἀνανδρίας δαλία, unless, perchance, the *sheer fear of death*, and this *alone*. Yet, I admit, there is a sort of chiaro oscuro, both in notion and diction, about this supposition which is anything but satisfactory even to myself, and, if I must vindicate it, I can only do so by the following threefold hint. Firstly, the ancient Greeks and Romans, as we might easily show from innumerable passages, especially in the Poets, e. g. Horace, Virgil, Juvenal, Lucan, were constantly warning and warring against mere fear of death as a sign of pusillanimity and a drawback upon felicity. Secondly, there is a passage in the Greek medical writer Galenus, who lived in the 2nd cent. p. C., to the effect that „there are some who at one and the same time fear, and compass, death“, the context of which I am, however, unacquainted with, since I have merely found it quoted by modern medical writers, e. g. Osiander (in the work mentioned in §. 13). Thirdly, both the Epikurists and the Stoics, as we shall learn by and by, did not scruple or fail to denounce and ridicule suicide, if committed from mere fear of death, as something unmanly, undignified, unphilosophic, in spite of their advocacy of suicide in general. — And, this is the conclusion we cannot but arrive at, Plato's views in the above passage of the Leges are almost, or entirely, Stoic; for what he condemns, the Stoics, too, would condemn. Nor unaccountably so. For, if death be merely the physical act of dying, as it was to many and most of the Pagans of classical antiquity, we may safely assert that to fear it as such was effeminate and unwise, something more or less to be laughed at and despised, and by no means justly or naturally the object of greatest fear. What has raised the fear of death among Christians into even a lawful virtue, or, at all events, a pardonable sensation, is the thought of what „comes after death“ the thought of „dreaming“, as Shakspeare terms it, the belief in and shrinking from „the day of Judgment“, as the Litany expresses it: which thought, belief, shrinking may well strike a tender conscience with awe, must, indeed, visit a disturbed imagination with tremor, and thus do „make cowards of us all“ in the face of the question: „to be, or not to be?“

Vide however, what will be said in the next §, in which we shall discuss Aristoteles, who pronounces suicide *in general* always

and of necessity a deed of *cowardice*, and argues against the morality of self-inflicted death (chiefly) from the standing-point of this very dictum, manifestly assigning, for instance, to the second and third (or, at all events, the third) of Plato's *legitimate* causes for suicide a place in his definition of *cowardice*. But to return to Plato.

If we look at those „second and third legitimate reasons“ which Plato assigns, we cannot but think that our philosopher has given to the suicide a wondrously long tether. Indeed, where is that psychology, where those metaphysics, logics, ethics, or laws which would enable us to say: „thus far, but no further“; which would warrant us in fixing the limits of what is to me or to thee honor or disgrace, urgent or not urgent, weakness or strength, the exact measure of sensibility, the just standard of resistibility? In what case may suicide be not permitted, if those very motives which by far most usually evoke it, be declared to exculpate the doer, to justify the deed? What exceptions that are worth anything can be fairly and justly made to a rule which seems to include (almost) everything?

It is true, Stäudlin (p. 35 of the work quoted in the Preface) gives it as his opinion that Plato „only judges more mildly of the said three kinds of suicide, ohne sie deshalb objectiv zu rechtfertigen.“ But, what can this mean? What does it amount to? Is it not a mere sophism without any real import, a remark which appears acute, but is silly, a suggestion which for a moment seems to afford light, but, nevertheless, merely dazzles and bewilders, if we would pursue it? If any action, deliberately committed, be declared not to deserve punishment, is it not thereby declared non-criminal? If a philosopher, whilst avowedly investigating what ought, or ought not, to be penally dealt with, carefully exclude at the very outset certain acts, and pronounce them beyond the range and outside the pale of criminal jurisprudence, does he not thereby designate them as innocent, or, in other words, „objectively justify“ them? Of course, we do not affirm that he, therefore, represents them as the highest acts of virtue or piety, that he either directly or indirectly eulogizes them; but we do most emphatically assert that he does intend to put them forward as morally indifferent at least, *ἀδιαφορα*, as in no wise criminal, as, it may be, even laudable. Nor must we forget that Plato here places the second and third cause in the *same* category with the first; inasmuch, now, as the first cannot possibly

be supposed to involve any moral guilt, it follows that Plato, unless we are to believe him an unclear thinker and an illogical reasoner, must be supposed to have intended the identical non-involvement of moral guilt to apply equally to the second and third.

Moreover — and this is another objection, not to Ständlin, but to Plato —, our philosopher in the passage before us appears mainly in the character of ideal *legislator*; for he is endeavoring to fix what the Executive of the legislature ought, or ought not, to visit punishment upon. But it is one thing to sketch and lay down laws in one's imagination and on parchment for a Model-State, and it is another and a very different thing to test, and to act up to, such laws in a veritably realized Commonwealth. If, now, Plato himself had been called upon to act out, as judge or juryman, the principles he had in his capacity of philosopher and moralist thought out, he could scarcely have failed to discover the extreme questionableness and defectiveness of the previously mentioned fixations of his. What Magistracy, of whatsoever members of the community it may be formed, and whether of many or of few, can itself presume, or by others be presumed, to know and determine so accurately the *motive* or *motives* of the suicide as to be able to distinguish between ennui or faint-heartedness and those allowable or excusable causes our philosopher adduces, and to demonstrate the correctness of such distinction in a credible manner? From the deceased himself, of course, no statement of motive can *post factum* be extracted, and in by far the greater number of instances none is given, orally or in writing, *ante factum*; indeed, many a suicide himself is often anything but clearly conscious of his own motive or motives. And, it is equally certain that any circumstantial evidence, whether given by friend or foe, must needs be, although, of course, in diametrically opposite directions, one-sided, defective, because partial; and that, on the contrary, just those witnesses, the most impartial, because furthest removed from personal sympathies or antipathies, would necessarily be, as in no wise closely connected with the deceased, least likely able to afford aught but very doubtful and inconclusive evidence on the matter. Let us only bear in mind the extreme difficulty which our English Coroners and their Juries experience, if they be thoughtful and conscientious men, in establishing even so much as the mere sanity or insanity of a suicide, let alone the special motive, as far as it lay either in his soul or in his lot, for his self-inflicted death.

What measure and kind of punishment, however, Plato decrees unto what he considers and pronounces criminal suicide, we shall see in the next Chapter.

Another decidedly pro-suicidal passage in the *Leges* we have already in §. 13 quoted, analysed, and commented upon; and it is, no doubt, that passage to which Olympiodoros alludes, when Marsilius Ficinus (as quoted in §. 24) assures us of him: „Item subiungit Platonis in Legibus testimonium dicentis: hominem insanabili scelere comprehensum, velut libidine in matrem, vel concupiscentia sacrilegii, vel impetu simili, quem videat cohibere non posse, decere, ipsum hinc e medio tollere.“ I will, however, now add another dictum of Plato's which appears to me pertinent and illustrative.¹⁾ Sokrates. „Consequently, besides such Jurisprudence you will, probably, also introduce into the City such medical science as we have described, in order that the two together may foster those among the citizens who are of good kind (εὐφροῦς) in body and soul, but *let those die* who are so only according to the body, and even *destroy* those who are of evil sort (κακοφροῦς) and incurable according to the soul.“ Glaukon. „The best, at least, for those themselves to whom it happens, and also for the City, this must manifestly be.“ Ficinus (ibidem) says likewise. „Adducit (viz. Olympiodoros) Platonis testimonium in Republica, ubi permittere videtur homini diuturno incurabilique morbo prorsus oppresso se hinc absolvere, propterea, quod sit inutilis civitati. Oportere enim cives aut, non sibi, sed civitati vivere.“ Aye, even, perhaps, more than mere „videtur“, as the reader may convince himself by perusing e. g. in the third book of the said *Politia* sundry almost consecutive passages.²⁾

Some, however, might incline to suppose that there are, after all, in the writings of Plato utterances which could tend to limit or gainsay what has been previously adduced, discussed, and settled; and, therefore, we consider ourselves in fairness bound to draw attention to two passages which, if my memory do not very much deceive me (I must in this matter rely upon it, since sundry books I once read, e. g. Tennemann's *System der Platonischen Philosophie*, are not now within my reach to refer to), really have had an anti-suicidal import ascribed to them by some writer or writers.

1. The following beautiful words which Plato places upon the

¹⁾ *Politia*, lib. III, p. 151 in Bekker's edit. of 1817. ²⁾ *Ibid.* p. 147.

lips of Sokrates.¹⁾ „We must, consequently, think of the just man that, whether he get into poverty, or into diseases, or into whatsoever else is deemed an ill, these things too will, indeed, turn out for his good in life, or also after death. For, verily, never will the Gods neglect him who will zealously endeavor to become just, and, exercising virtue as far as it is possible unto man, to be like unto God.“ — We remark that, though such an assertion as this cannot fail to strike us as being self-evidently of anti-suicidal tone and tenor implicité, spiritually, yet, surely, no such mere general reflexion can consistently be allowed to invalidate the specific statements with which we have above been dealing:

2. A passage in the myth concerning the Pamphylian Er²⁾ who, after having been slain in battle, was found, when after the lapse of ten days the putrified corpses were being taken up, fully preserved, and on the twelfth day, when already placed upon the funeral pyre, revived, and then gave very detailed and exact tidings of what he had seen, during the interval of twelve days, beyond the grave. „But concerning those who live only a very short time after their birth, he related other things which it is not necessary to record here. However, for impiety and piety towards the Gods as well as towards Parents, and for suicide (?) he narrated still more momentous retributions“ (μείζους ἔτι τοὺς μισθοὺς).

Touching this mythos in general, curiosity might, first of all, tempt us to ask: was it really based upon some fictitious popular report? Or, was it a mere invention, a sort of jeu de fantasie of Plato's? Or, did Plato borrow it from some other writer? The author of the article on Cebes in Rose's new biographical Dictionary expresses the opinion that Plato took it from a work of Cebes', because Suidas (in his lexicon s. v. Kebes) says of one of the writings of that con-disciple of Plato's: ἵστ' δὲ τῶν ἐν ἁδου διήγησις. But, if I mistake not, the context in Suidas proves these words to refer to the so-called *πινάξ* or tabula of Cebes, a little work still extant, but which, merely a parable about this life alone, does not contain any allusion whatsoever to Hades. We, for our own part, should incline to suppose that Plato did not *invent* exactly this myth, since similar narratives, at a later period anyhow, appear to have been anything but unusual among the ancient Greeks; nor

1) *Politia*, lib. X, p. 500. 2) *Ibid.* lib. X, p. 504.

were they, perhaps, unfamiliar to the Hebrews in the days of Him who „spake by Parables“, and who himself uttered, for instance, that one of Lazarus and the Rich Man, not wholly dissimilar in design, howsoever unlike otherwise.¹⁾ But, if Plato *borrowed* it, whether from some now lost treatise of a more ancient Greek thinker,²⁾ or from still earlier Mysteries,³⁾ he may, at the same time, have *remoulded* it, just as, for instance, Plutarch evidently modelled upon this very Platonic passage his detailed and thoughtful similar mythus about a certain Thespesius.⁴⁾ At all events, a historical basis it cannot possibly be meant to possess, in consequence of sundry internal features which it would be easy to adduce; a case of apparent death, which Schubert suggests in one of the notes to his already quoted *Geschichte der Seele*, cannot well be imagined, since that does not last so long; and Beck's question⁴⁾ „should it not be an intimation of somnambulism and magnetic sleep!“ seems rather too mystical, for me at least. — I have dwelt somewhat long upon these particulars, because Cicero evidently planned his *somnium Scipionis*, which will in a later § occupy us, upon it, and because Macrobius commences his Commentary on the said *somnium Scipionis* by a vindication of it as a justifiable enrobement of serious and significant thought.⁶⁾ Now, however, to our special question.

I do not feel certain that „suicide“ is here alluded to by the words *αὐτόχειρας φόνου* (sic! in all editions I have consulted; but *αὐτόχειρας* seems a strange and an anomalous grammatical form, whence Ast, in his lexicon *Platonicum*, really gives *αὐτόχειρος* instead as an hypothesis of his own). On the *twofold* signification of *αὐτόχειρ*, *αὐτοχειρία* vide what was already said at the commencement of §. 9. We ought, doubtless, to translate „for self-handed murder“, or „for homicides who have polluted their own hands by murder“; and, thence, the allusion might be just as well to slayers of *others* as to slayers of *themselves*; and, indeed, the context seems to favor rather the former interpretation; for we are immediately

¹⁾ Compare also Matth. XXV, 31—46 with the contents of the entire supposititious communication of the Pamphylian. ²⁾ The catalogues in Diogenes Laertius inform us that some treatises of theirs had Hades for their specific theme. ³⁾ Tiedemann, *Griechenlands erste Philosophen*, p. 42, expressly attributes a *καταβασίς εἰς ἄδου* to Orpheus. ⁴⁾ At the conclusion of his beautiful treatise de his qui sero a Numine puniuntur. ⁵⁾ Plato's *Philosophie im Abtritt ihrer genetischen Entwicklung*, 1853, p. 190. ⁶⁾ Vide the quotation of Augustinus in his *de Civit. Dei*, XXII, c. 28 from Cicero's *de Republ.*, and Macrobius lib. I, c. 28sq.

afterwards told of the Pamphylian tyrant Ardaios who had killed his own father and brother. But, supposing even the passage at issue really to refer to suicides, their future destiny is, at all events, not dwelt upon, no doom upon them is pronounced, though, it is true, if our passage is to have any definite meaning at all, the natural context would force us to admit that it implies and intimates *suffering, punishment* as their portion.

§. 26. ARISTOTELES (in the 4th cent. a. C.).

Scarcely aught but the *ethical* works of this wondrously gifted man and many-sided writer will here concern us, and, therefore, a few brief preliminary remarks on the supposed relative value of the said works in regard to one another will not be out of place here. The results which Biese, in his somewhat recent heavily elaborate publication,¹⁾ arrives at on this much-debated question are about as follows.

The Nicomachean Ethics (concerning the name various conjectures have been hazarded, e. g. that Aristoteles' son, Nicomachus, edited, or re-edited, them, or that his father dedicated them to, or composed them for, him) are that work which, as regards both contents and form, and more especially the method of philosophizing, bears altogether the stamp of Aristoteles' mind, and must, therefore, constitute, as an indisputably genuine production, the base for any and every discussion of his moral philosophy. The master himself, probably, connected the individual dissertations of which it consists into a totality, and published them as such. The Eudemic Ethics were, presumptively, composed from Aristoteles' lectures by his immediate pupil Eudemos, who had entered most thoroughly into his teacher's speculations, and had remained most faithful to them. The *Magna Moralia*, finally, are a compressed extract made by some unknown hand from the *Nicomacheia*, and may, likewise, in some passages serve as a supplement to the latter.

Aristoteles, now, is almost universally understood to have been thoroughly antagonistic to suicide; but, perhaps, we shall be enabled to place his opinions in the clearest and fullest light by separating

¹⁾ Die Philosophie des Aristoteles in ihrem innern Zusammenhange, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des philosophischen Sprachgebrauchs, aus dessen Editionen entwickelt, Bd. II, S. 296—300.

what he advances into two divisions, the one of which we will call *political*, and the other *psychological*, which two hang about thus together. The law enjoins that man as social being should act in a certain manner; but, ere he can feel, act, be as member of society that which political morality inculcates, he must attain unto a right position to his own self, work out and exhibit in himself, according to a due insight into the tendencies and capacities of his soul, the just medium between all dangerous, irrational, pernicious extremes.

1. Aristoteles' political anti-suicidal argument.

He affirms that suicide is reprehensible and criminal on the score of citizenship, on the ground of social duty.¹⁾ But we must take his own words, as far as they now concern us, separately, since every sentence would seem to render a few remarks more or less necessary.

a. οὐ καλεῖται ἑαυτὸν ἀποκτείνειν ὁ νόμος· ἀ δὲ μὴ καλεῖται, ἀπαγορεύει, i. e. in substance: the law does not say „thou shalt destroy thyself, and, therefore, it says „thou shalt *not* destroy thyself“, or: suicide is *antinomical*, and its illegality must be inferred from the *silence* of the law. This is the main principle here laid down, in which there is a self-evident peculiarity from our modern standing-point, viz. the inference that the law *forbids* what it does not *bid*. In this matter, however, I will content myself with transcribing, though I do not feel quite satisfied as to its historico-juridical tenability, the note which R. W. Browne, referring to Michelet as his authority, appends to his version of the said words.²⁾ „The Greeks recognized the principle that it was the duty of their State to support the sanctions of virtue by legislative enactments; the moral education of the people formed part of the legislative system. Hence the rule which Aristotle states („quae lex non jubet vetat“). The principles of our law, on the contrary, are derived from the Roman law, which confines itself in all cases to forbidding wrongs done to society. Hence the rule with us is exactly the contrary („quae lex non vetat permittit“).

b. ὁ δὲ δι' ὀργὴν ἑαυτὸν σφάττων, ἐκὼν τοῦτο ὀρθῶς παρὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον, ὃ οὐκ εἶπ' ὁ νόμος. There exists also the reading νόμον³⁾ instead of λόγον, which would, however, not only yield, as it seems to me, a palpable tautology, but also cause us to lose the additional

¹⁾ *Ethica ad Nicom.* lib. V, c. 11; and cf. *Ethica ad Eudemum*, lib. IV, c. 9. ²⁾ *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1850, p. 147. ³⁾ Even Zell in his edition adopts it. Bekker and Brewer in their respective editions read λόγον.

significant allusion to, and assertion of, the *irrationality* of suicide which, as I take it, Aristoteles clearly intends to maintain by implying that *ὀργή* is a characteristic accompaniment of self-destruction. But — and this is a far more important point to be considered — did Aristoteles intend to pronounce *all* suicide, suicide *in the abstract* *παρὰ τὸν ὁρθὸν λόγον* (or νόμον), or only, rather, to level his denunciation at *such* self-destruction as is committed δι' ὀργήν? First of all, then, what does *ὀργή* here really signify? The concomitant *ἔκων* proves that we have, at all events, here to deal with a conscious and wilful act, not with aught allied even to such semi-maddened enthusiasm as originated the well-known term *Orgies*.¹⁾ Nor can I bring myself to believe that Aristoteles intended to ascribe *ὀργή* in its usual acceptation „rage“ (anger, indignation) to suicide in general as a necessary accompaniment; or, if he had done so, we should have to accuse him of a fallacy (vide §. 13) whose vagueness alone could shield it against detection. (Wiser is the βίβλ of the Neo Platonists, as we shall see by and by; vide also Cicero and Lactantius in later §§.) If, on the contrary, Aristoteles should be understood to have meant to condemn as unlawful and irrational that suicide only which is really accompanied by *ὀργή* in the signification under mention, he would, in force of this passage at least, scarcely be entitled to a singularly prominent place in the ranks of philosophical *antagonists* to suicide; for among both ancient and modern *defenders* of suicide some have agreed to condemn suchlike *orgic* suicide, and to insist that the voluntary relinquishment of life should be *calm* and *deliberate*. Thus e. g. among the Stoics more especially Mark Aurel, but even Seneca too (vide §. 29); and among the Moderns Robeck (vide a later Section), and Ugo Foscolo who (p. 179 of the work quoted in §. 21) lets Jacopo Ortis, when about to commit the deed we are speaking of, expressly write: „Not in rash manner, no, everything well considered, and sure of my course. — How rarely a storm, before death, could speak so calmly with me, or I so calmly with it.“ Nor do I, even taking the entire context of our passage into consideration, feel by any means quite certain that this dictum of Aristotle's must necessarily be believed *generically* anti-suicidal, and that, therefore, *ὀργή* is to be understood in an extremely comprehensive manner so that it could in a

¹⁾ Vide Diod. Sic. III, c. 65.

certain sense apply to every case of deliberate suicide, although, for instance, the poet Young¹⁾ similarly speaks of suicide as „giving rage the rein“, but himself defines what he means by rage as „punctilio's pique of pride, or gloom of humor“, so that he might safely have proceeded to specify sundry other motives for the act at issue without violating linguistic exactness one iota more. Of course, the sentence under a) is quite general, but the sentence under b) seems restrictive.²⁾

c. ἀδικεῖ ἄρα (viz. the said suicide), i. e. he, therefore, commits injustice. — In connexion with this argumentation of his, Aristoteles carefully distinguishes between βλάπτειν and ἀδικεῖν, and expressly and emphatically pronounces suicide to be an ἀδικία, an act of injustice. Injustice to whom or to what?

Not to the suicide *himself*, since a person can as little be said to do an injustice to himself as he could be said to confer an obligation upon himself, inasmuch as every species of ἀδικία presupposes both an object outside of our self and *involuntariness* on the part of the patient. I am unable to determine at this moment, whether, or not, the well-known Ulpianic axiom in Roman Jurisprudence „volunti non fit injuria“, and the in the Pandects uttered „invito laeso“ as a characteristic sine qua non of criminality, developed themselves out of, or in any wise connect themselves with, the above Aristotelian passage. To me, the more I have reflected upon them, the more they have appeared, even juridically, very doubtful maxims, at all events, and „*civitate volente non fit injuria*“ would, perhaps, be as good and true a maxim, and in some respects even a truer and better one.

Nor to the Divinity; for the Godhead does not enter the sphere of the Ethics of Aristoteles, whose systematically clear and comprehensively palpable moral philosophy has, though it exercised almost authoritative sway during the christian middle ages, and remains so influential in our modern Schools and Systems, no affinity to the dreamy elements of Pythagorism, the genial familiarity of Sokratism, the poetic loftiness of Platonism. According to it, the human soul is not a detached infinitesimal particle of the Divinity incarcerated

¹⁾ N. T. V., 431sq. ²⁾ Giphanius, in one of his posthumous works, *Commentarii in Ethica ad Nicomachum*, 1608, p. 444, says positively, but unclearly: „ut ira commotus, quod hic nominatim expressit Aristoteles. Nam servitutis metu, aut alia necessitate subactus, quia non sponte, injuriam facere vix videtur“, &c.

in Time and Flesh, dreaming regretful dreams about a fallen estate, or cherishing impassioned longings for return to a lost spirit-home. No, the Law is man's God; the State his Heaven; no, man is a mere *political animal*, and Aristoteles' moral system stands *earthily on the earth*, without any immediate reference to a Divine Will and an Immortal Destiny.

Therefore, the State or Society is the only object outside of our self which can be here thought and spoken of. Suicide is a wrong committed against the State, i. e. against social order, and a violation of all such just things as are commanded by the Law. And, though Aristoteles does not inform us by express terms, in the course of his subsequent demonstration, in how far and for what reasons (except the above reason of the silence of the law) suicide is a crime committed against the body politic, we must, as a matter of course, understand him to mean that a human being, by a voluntary death, withdraws a personal individual, a member, a citizen from the state, and thus, as it were, commits a robbery. At least, this is the position against which almost all modern defenders of suicide, e. g. Hume, Holbach, Foscolo, Fries, have not failed to point some of their heaviest artillery by the counter-position that „man has duties towards the state only as long as he demands anything from it, a relationship which is entirely done away with by death.“ My own impressions, however, on Aristoteles' political argument are as follow.

If suicide be a wrong at all, whether we choose to define such wrong as the doing of an injustice (*ἀδικεῖν*), or the doing of an injury (*βλάπτειν*) — why should we dwell upon technical quibbles? —, the said wrong would appear to me to touch and affect something which is *prior* to, and in so far may be said to be *exclusive* of, Law, Citizenship, Society, the State, viz. what we might call „*sacred nature*“, or abstract mankind. Ere Law was or can be, life itself must be; for it is the sole foundation and necessary condition of all Law. Before, therefore, Society can put in its claim upon man's life, Mankind itself which has, as it were, been entrusted unto man, who is only a representative part of it, may be said to have a claim. Consequently, the suicide may be fitly and justly said, if we would go back to first causes, to destroy — we will not here say: to degrade — mankind, as far as his individual power extends. Or, if this were otherwise, we should, I presume, be justified in

arguing that unto man, not yet formed into a social covenant, living still in a nomadic state, abiding each by and for himself in comparative isolatedness, suicide would be a warrantable action.

Furthermore, — supposing the above objection to be somewhat too ideological —, this one is realistic enough: if the wrong of suicide be reduced to the sole circumstance that it deprives the State of a citizen, might we not feel tempted to enquire, whether such a loss could not prove under certain given circumstances really a gain? Let us, for instance, suppose a vicious or an idle citizen who disregards, neglects, transgresses all positive duties of his citizenship: does he not, „thereby already becoming a traitor to his country“, in verity deprive it of a citizen? nay, may he not even, by his influence and example, be the means of depriving it, as it were, of many citizens? The sooner, viewing the matter from a mere politico-economical standing-point, such a one takes himself off, though by suicide, the better it would be for the State; and only his like would be likely to follow him, or — have to be sent after him. Or, let us suppose even a citizen, stricken by age, disease (or, insanity), not only utterly helpless, but in need of constant and varied protection, assistance, support: surely, in a mere politico-economical point of view, as a member of the State, his loss, even by suicide, could not be felt; for his existence as citizen cannot be accounted any longer, as it were, a reality, and its discontinuance, though voluntary, might even be computed a relief. Or, let us, finally, suppose only an over-populated State which has neither work, nor room, nor food for dozens, hundreds, thousands of its so-called Citizens, more especially at certain periods of distress, dearth, famine, and no Colonies to send them to, and no means of enabling them to Emigrate: would the body politic as such incline to regard the suicide of an individual or of individuals, merely as far as they are numerical units, in the light of the loss of so many citizens, or, to deplore their self-inflicted deaths as public grievances, as social misdeeds? And, if it did, would it be justified in doing so? Most assuredly not, methinks, if voluntary emigration out of life, i. e. suicide, be simply = voluntary emigration out of one's country, i. e. dissolution of the bonds of actual citizenship.

Finally, though there may and does dwell in the nature and power of the Body Politic *much* of what renders suicide wrong and criminal, yet not by any means *all* dwells therein. Else, the Law

of any State by *not* interdicting suicide, by even *permitting* it (and, as we shall see in the next Chapter, the Magistracy in sundry Greek colonies assumed the authority, and exercised the function, of occasionally legalizing it), would ipso facto and per se render it justifiable and equitable. To this point, however, we shall have to revert, when we come to discuss ancient legislation; and we may, therefore, now proceed to adduce and review:

2. Aristoteles' psychological anti-suicidal argument.

We know that, according to our Stagirite, all Virtue is not so much a fire-force of holy endeavor, an issue out of the well-spring of love, an element soulful and venerative that agitates, instigates, elevates, edifies, as, rather, a mere given *less* or *more* lying between two extremes, a bare juste-milieu, „some poor trite thing called Moderation“, which he defines, if with startling ingenuity, also with wearisome uniformity. Much of what he says so accurately and soberly is, no doubt, wise and true in its way, degree, and generation, as is all Kant-rationalism and Bentham-utilitarianism; but, nevertheless, much remains, as it seems to me, arbitrary and defective, because that *Deisidaimonia* is wanting to which St. Paul (Acts XVII, 22) alludes, because that *Agape* is wanting which the same Apostle (1 Cor. XIII, 1 ff.) postulates. According to Aristoteles, then, the virtue of *ἀνδρία*, valor, is the just mean or medium between fear which falls short of, and self-confidence or rashness which exceeds, the right measure of it. Valor, however, derives its virtue only from the nature of the motive and the character of the object which call it into exercise, from the reason which inspires, the aim which directs, it. For instance, not to fear real, self-incurred, merited ignominy is shamelessness, indifference, callousness, i. e. the opposite of virtuous valor; and, not to fear the fury of the elements, or the violence of brutes, is ignorance, temerity, madness, i. e. something distinct from virtuous valor. The most moral cannot fear too much, or cannot help fearing, *such* things as evils. The most terrible, now, among the objects of human fear, among expected evils, is Death as the termination of life (and as such, according to Aristoteles, the termination of everything). If, therefore, it be, on the one hand, the highest proof of virtuous valor to brave and endure death fearlessly for an honorable cause and from patriotic zeal, it is, on the other hand, cowardice, effeminacy (*δουλία, μαλακία*) to flee unto it, this same most terrible among the

objects of human fear, for causes which ought not, perhaps, to be objects of fear at all, and which one may *not* fear without, therefore, even being, properly speaking, virtuously valorous. Such causes are e. g. guiltless poverty, disease, &c. Valor submits to the Terrible which it is noble to choose, and disgraceful to flee from; but it is cowardice, effeminacy to succumb to Death, not for the purpose of effecting what is morally good, but only to avoid, and to escape from, what is troublesome and discomfiting. This is about that train of thought which leads Aristoteles to pronounce suicide, if committed for the purpose of escaping from poverty, the tortures of love, or any other painful sensation, *cowardice*, in the following, perhaps, over-celebrated words:¹⁾ τὸ δ' ἀποθνήσκειν, φεύγοντα πενίαν ἢ ἥρωα ἢ τι λυπηρὸν, οὐκ ἀνδρείου, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δειλοῦ μαλακία γὰρ τὸ φεύγειν τὰ ἐπίπονα· καὶ οὐχ ὅτι καλὸν, ὑπομένει, ἀλλὰ φεύγων κακόν. With this passage the reader may compare the more comprehensive, but less definite, expression of the same sentiment in the *Ethica* and *Eudemum*:²⁾ οὐτ' εἰ φεύγοντες τὸ πονεῖν, ὅπερ πολλοὶ ποιοῦσιν, οὐδὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐθεὶς ἀνδρείος, καθάπερ καὶ Ἀγαθὼν φησὶ „φαῦλοι βροτῶν γὰρ τοῦ πονεῖν ἡσώμενοι θανεῖν ἐρῶσιν.“

The above dictum in the *Nicomachea* becomes the more mark-worthy and significant because of the frequency with which it has been approvingly and triumphantly repeated by almost every christian antagonist to suicide, and because of its having in a great measure given birth to that exclamation which we nowadays so constantly hear: suicide is a cowardly action! But, if I mistake not, such an exclamation, whether uttered with a smile or a sneer, cannot exactly settle fully and finally the subtle ethical question which has become so momentous in this modern social life of ours. As regards Aristoteles himself, however, it may, and indeed must, take us not a little by surprise, if he really intended by this same passage to condemn suicide *per se* and *all* suicide as a deed of cowardice and effeminacy; for such a declaration would be most manifestly not only in direct opposition to the entire spirit of both Greek and Roman antiquity (*apparent* exceptions to this assertion will be found noticed in their proper place, cf. e. g. §§. 15, 18, 31, 37), but also, I sincerely believe, at variance with both history and psychology.

¹⁾ *Ethica ad Nicom.* lib. III, c. 7, §. 13. ²⁾ Lib. III, c. 1. In A. T. H. Fritzsche's edition, 1851, p. 68, where see in the note what can be said about this same Agathon.

Plato, as we have seen, already admitted and taught that suicide possibly may be, and sometimes doubtless is, the effect of a want of manliness, fortitude; but this position is something essentially different from dryly ascribing *any* and *every* suicide to cowardice, effeminacy. Whatever else we might incline to object to suicide, surely, one would not be justified in denying that, at least, some degree of courage and resolution is required to vanquish calmly and deliberately what is unquestionably one of the most powerful instincts of our nature: the Love of Life, and to seek and evoke voluntarily what most human beings have an exceeding dread of: Death. Whatever else we might incline to object to many suicides, e. g. Cato, Brutus, surely, one would not be warranted in maintaining that either in life or in death they could fairly be reproached with anything like what we ordinarily do understand, and even according to Aristoteles' definition cannot but understand, by want of courage and resolution. Therefore, every Greek and Roman historian, men who, whatever their shortcomings on sundry ethical points may have been, generally had considerable insight into, and reverence for, manfulness, energy, and who generally wrote in accordance with the faith of their time and people in which and by whom they wished to be read, understood, sympathized with, may be said to laud suicide without limitation as a heroic virtue, whenever they narrate a case of it, and such cases are very numerous on the pages of several of them.

It was, perchance, some such view of the matter as this which induced Giphanius¹⁾ to assert that Aristoteles does not here express a disapproval and reprobation of *every* species of suicide, but that he, on the contrary, is speaking only of suicide from the motives actually named, or cognate ones, and at the same time reserves in his mind *some* justifiable or praiseworthy motives for self-destruction. I will extract from his remarks, some of which are, by the by, inaccurate, only what pertains directly to the passage before us. „Quaeri autem potest, an Aristotelis hic locus in omnibus causis locum habeat: hoc est, an quacunq[ue] in causa quis sibi mortem afferat, ignavus sit dicendus — Quae ut vera sit sententia, non puto tamen eam fuisse Aristotelis mentem, sed hanc potius, ut qui ob paupertatem, amorem, morbum, mortes suorum, aut similes cala-

¹⁾ Ubi *supra*, pp. 220, 221.

mitates mortem sibi afferant, non sint fortes dicendi. De his autem, qui servitutis, aut alterius turpitudinis metu mortem sibi consciscant, non puto loqui Aristotelem." We remark. a. It is most true that there are many other motives for suicide besides πᾶσις and ἡρως, if Aristoteles had thought proper to marshal them forth in catalogue-form; nay, that there ever have been and ever will be almost innumerable ones (cf. §. 13) which it is next to impossible to specify completely; it is also equally true that, albeit poverty and love have become in modern times by far the most frequent causes of suicide, they were, as far as we know from extant ancient chronicles, anything but the most frequent ones in classical ages, and, certainly, not exactly either the most noble or the most manly ones even in the sight of pro-suicidal Greek and Roman moralists. b. Yet, we might urge that all other possible or usual motives may reasonably be supposed contained implicite in the τὸ λυπηρὸν of our passage, unless we should incline to refer also this word to what is mainly or solely of a weakly and womanish character. c. Also, supposing Aristoteles' views to have led him to reserve any definite limitations to his general declaration that to be vanquished by misery, and to flee from it, is cowardice, we might have expected so analytical and practical a writer to have either here or elsewhere distinctly pointed out such causes and cases as he considered himself bound to except, since Plato had, as we have seen, expressly and carefully distinguished between what he considered to be justifiable and unjustifiable causes of self-destruction. — Here, or *elsewhere*, I said. To be sure, we are not in possession of all his writings; but we will let such incidental glances at our topic as are scattered in his extant works pass before us in quick review. Their testimony will, perhaps, prove *rather unfavorable than favorable* to the view taken by Giphanius, though I should be very loth to regard it therefore as baseless phantasy or sophistic jugglery. Four suchlike glances present themselves to our notice.

The first. Aristoteles in the course of his earnest and searching development of the essence, grounds and workings of Friendship which is, according to his theory, not unjustly, a Virtue or, at least, a Companion to Virtue, would seem to deduce man's relation of friendship with his fellow-being from the relation in which each individual stands unto himself. Man can be his own friend, and must be so, ere he can become another's friend: a friend is one's

second Ego, and our position to him is conditioned by our position to our first Ego, i. e. our own self; we must love our Self, ere we can love Another, and self-love in the deepest and noblest acceptation, altogether different from selfishness, is only another term for being one's own friend. Such self-love, however, postulates desire to live, fondness for the preservation of one's existence, which existence is the source of what is both useful and agreeable; presupposes, moreover, delight in intercourse with one's self which delight is the consequence of our having recollections that are pleasurable, hopes that yield joy, and reflexions which afford copious and rational occupation. But the bad and unreasoning cannot be friends unto themselves, and, therefore, cannot be friends unto others. They are, as it were, at warfare with themselves, and in their inner disunion of the Sensual and the Rational aim at unwise and uncertain things, cannot bear solitude, seek dissipation and distraction, possess no real friendships, are tortured by the Past and disappointed by the Future, and, seeking to flee from themselves on account of their badness, *often hate their own life and do violence unto themselves*:¹⁾ οἷς δὲ πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ πέπρακται διὰ τὴν μοχθηρίαν, μισοῦσί τε καὶ φεύγουσι τὸ ζῆν, καὶ ἀναιροῦσιν ἑαυτούς. About the meaning of these words there cannot be any doubt, nor about the psychological possibility of the fact therein stated.²⁾ — Only one casual remark will we here venture upon. When we come to discuss the New Testament, we shall learn that sundry writers have pronounced suicide invariably an offspring of self-hatred, perhaps, not without a reminiscence of this Aristotelean passage. But this view appears to me extremely one-sided, to say the least of it. On the one hand, what we are wont to call *self-love*, when extreme, absorbing, almost madly so, whether in the form of ambition, pride, vanity, or conceit, may — the matter is too self-evident and well-known to require either demonstration or exemplification — become, and often does become, the immediate cause of suicide. And, on the other hand, it is a far more curious and note-worthy fact that those very persons who would seem to have had the most urgent cause for inavertible *self-hatred* rarely have become slayers of themselves. It is not by any means difficult to imagine that men like e. g.

¹⁾ Ethica ad Nicom. lib. IX, c. 4. ²⁾ However, Zell's different reading καὶ δ. τ. μ. μισοῦνται, φ. x. λ. entirely alters the thought, renders it more natural, but less impressive.

Nero and the elder Robespierre, after having, like monstrous, world-branded parodies of human nature, destroyed with tiger-like rage all noble and sacred life around them as so many unwelcome witnesses to their own apostasy from humankind, and swept away whatsoever of humanity around them aspired loftily and holily, — it is not by any means difficult to imagine that suchlike men would, when no more victims are near at hand to slake their thirst of blood and destruction, pause awhile and, gazing intently at the desolation they have wrought, become conscience-stricken, feel that repentance would be unavailing, see that compensation must prove impossible, and in silent horror from intense self-hatred rid themselves spasmodically of their anguishing and detested solitude by voluntarily laying their own corpse among the heaps of the slain, amid the „devastations of abomination.“ As before said, it is by no means difficult to imagine man's hatred of others thus, Nemesis-like, engendering hatred of ourselves, and such self-hatred finally giving birth to self-slaughter. Yet, as I have already hinted, by far the greatest criminals of both ancient and modern times have *not* ended as suicides; and, if I purposely quoted Nero and Robespierre, it was only to remind the reader that *their* attempts at self-destruction stood in little or no connexion with aught like what Aristoteles meant, and also Christian moralists mean, by self-hatred.

The second. A certain Satyros, surnamed Philopator, had (according to the Scholiast Aspasius, whose testimony, however, Zell who gives it in the original Greek,¹⁾ has certain misgivings about, and which Fritzsche²⁾ treats still more sceptically) killed himself from grief upon his father's grave, the reason of his extreme filial affection having been the circumstance that his father had proved of essential service to him by enabling him to gain his end in a love-affair. Of this deed, now, Aristoteles³⁾ intimates that it was an *extreme folly*, viz. of extravagant affection: *λίαν ἐδόκει μωραίνειν*.

The third. Those few, but neither way very important, incidental passages in the Problemata which we have mentioned and benoted already in §. 13.

The fourth. A couple of lines in a paean or skolion, addressed to Virtue or Valor, ἀρετή, which Aristoteles had composed on the

¹⁾ Commentarius, p. 274. ²⁾ p. 163 of his edition of the Eth. Eud. ³⁾ Ethica and Nicom. lib. VII, c. 4.

- death of his friend Hermias,¹⁾ and in which Ajas' descent into Hades, i. e. his voluntary death, is extolled as an effect of his *love of virtue*:

σοῖς δὲ πόθοις Ἀχιλλεύς
 Αἴας τ' Αἴδαο δόμους
 ἦλθον —

Haply, to such a mere poetic allusion not much weight of any kind can be attached. But it may be worth while to remind the reader that the death and memory of Ajas were held in especial and singular reverence by entire Greek antiquity. Pindar, as we have seen in §. 13, had celebrated him in more than one of his Hymns, Plato speaks with a sort of compassionate admiration of his wrathful sensitiveness even in Hades,²⁾ and festivals, temples, statues, paintings, and coins were called into requisition for the purpose of doing honor to him.³⁾

Differences, then, may prevail about the exact extent to which Aristoteles intended to carry his far-famed and often-repeated anti-suicidal arguments; but, whosoever has pondered deeply the question at issue, can scarcely fail to discern and admit that, if we a priori cast away every *religious* motive of duty, entirely throw aside God, Providence, Immortality, Retribution, all argumentation against suicide will of necessity stand bereft of, at least, one of its most essential forces, nay, even of its main and final support, howsoever skilfully and acutely political and psychological considerations may be levied and employed to occupy the place of the sentiment of Religion in either the mystically theosophic or the practically devotional sense of this term. — — —

And, even if — on this point we would now fain dwell at some length — our Stagirite meant to pronounce suicide as such at all times an act of cowardice, we are most certainly in no wise bound to accord more value to his dictum, than our own insight into the human heart and estimate of human action shall call upon us to do; and what even might have been true from the standing-point of Peripateticism need not by any means be so from that upon which Christianity has placed us.

¹⁾ It is communicated by Diogenes Laërtius in his life of Aristoteles, §. 7. On Hermias himself and Aristoteles' relation to him vide Stahr, *Aristoteles*, B. I, pp. 75—84. ²⁾ *Politia*, lib. X. ³⁾ Vide e. g. *Died. Sik.* XVII, 17; *Philostratos*, life of Apollonius of Tyana, lib. II, c. 22.

If we ask, for instance, Bayle, he tells us¹⁾ that *the first* of the reasons why men, when miserable, do not more frequently destroy themselves, is „que pour une telle expédition il faut un certain degré de *courage*, que tout le monde n'a pas dans l'abattement d'une noire mélancholie, ou d'une langueur.“ If we ask Meilhan or Rachel Levin, they assure us (in an Essay and an Epistle which will be discussed in a later Section) that, in whatsoever other light we may choose to regard suicide, it is almost always, if, indeed, not invariably, a courageous deed. But, it is true, they intended to write in defence of this action; yet, they most certainly did not reason or judge without some knowledge, at least, of what both the world and philosophy are wont to designate and define as courage or cowardice. I am perfectly well aware that, on the other hand, almost any given number of anti-suicidal moralists might be quoted who, fond of strong and slashing words, and addicted to a sort of dictatorially sweeping style, half-Sultanic and half-Papal, say, like J. D. Michaelis in his *Mosaisches Recht*, suicide is really „poltroonery.“ There is something repugnant to me and almost ridiculous in a Professor on his cathedra or a Parson on his pulpit suggesting and denouncing the „poltroonery“ of some of the tried worthies of ancient or the tried martyrs of modern ages. Moreover, when such persons begin to analyse and demonstrate, they not infrequently, like the anonymous English author of a very powerfully and agonizingly conceived and composed modern story,²⁾ get confused and all but contradict themselves; for he in one passage calls suicide „the last, and *weakest* act of human folly“, and lets his hero in another passage confess that he had contemplated this same act, and would fain have committed it, but „*dared* not.“ Indeed, the entire investigation into the question, whether courage or cowardice be involved in and displayed by the act under mention is, at best, a dubious and an unpropitious terrain to do moral battle upon, because each victim's *organization* and *circumstances* would have to be taken into very scrupulous and minute account, ere we should feel ourselves justified in pronouncing him to have fallen as a valiant soldier, or as a fugitive craven, with the death-wound on his brow, or on his back. It is a Janus-headed problem which,

¹⁾ *Reponses aux questions d'un Provincial*, in his *Oeuvres diverses*, excepté le Dictionnaire, T. III, p. 633. ²⁾ *Misérables*, 1833, pp. 81, 105.

though we should wish to approach it by the merest general hints only, requires at all events two altogether separate considerations: a *hitherward* one, and a *yonderward* one, as it were.

It is, doubtless, weakness of soul to end life rather than bear disappointed love, abused confidence, broken faith, frustrated hope, foiled ambition, irradicable disease, torturing pain, irremediable poverty, age-strickenness, exile, captivity, servitude, weariness of life. It is, methinks, also weakness of soul to end life rather than endure the loss of spouse, child, friend, rather than endure domestic loneliness or domestic wretchedness, and, perchance, rather than brave a lost reputation or defy a degrading punishment. It is, I ween, likewise weakness of soul to end life for the gratification of dark vindictiveness or from eagerness for tragic immortality. But, can we call it exactly weakness of soul, to end life when despondent doubt, harrowing scruple, unceasing remorse, absolute despair have made their ravage within our mind, heart, body? Or, are we warranted in calling it exactly weakness of soul, when maid or matron would rather crimson her body with her own blood than allow her cheek to be mantled by the blush of purity forfeited unto brutal violence? when youth or man would prefer sheathing his sword in his own breast, if tempted or forced to draw it against that to which he had sworn fealty or those to whom he had vowed protection? I, too, believe that, haply, the *strongest strength* of soul in man or woman *can* and *will* outlive even these and kindred things, though they should come in their intensest force and most appalling form, wrestle with them as within himself, or battle against them as before himself, or trample on them as beneath himself, or bow unto them as above himself, and, though he sink in the strife, still triumph over them with a „hallowed be thy Name, and thy Will be done on Earth.“ But, let us not deceive ourselves. It is an easy thing to talk of suchlike courage, when the rays of prosperity shine upon us, the vistas of happiness beckon unto us, the noises of mirth sound on our hearth, the consciousness of innocence makes music in our souls, and pleasing dreams play around our slumbers; for the tempter Suicide rarely presents himself as guest in the palaces of wealth, the halls of feasting, the saloons of fashion, the comfort-crowded chambers of rest. It is an easy thing for the mean-spirited and callous-hearted who heed neither disgrace, howsoever marked, nor slavery, howsoever degrading, nor sin, howsoever

sully, if they can only drag on earthly life, howsoever despidely and despicably, somewhat longer, to talk of suchlike courage; for what may be and is veritably heroic, whether in living or in dying, is something equally quite beyond the range of their moral sensations. It is an easy thing for the unscrupulous and unprincipled who with a sort of Devil-may-care recklessness and scoundrelism are determined to live and die „game“, to open the „world-oyster“, aye, and eat it too, as snugly and as long as they have the favorable chance and the rude strength, to talk of suchlike courage; but want of conscience is, just as little as want of sensibility, identical with the possession of courage. It is, finally, an easy thing for those who have never thought, never doubted, never believed, whether from inability or from indifference, to talk of suchlike courage; but the dullness, dimness, or deadness of the mental capacities and spiritual faculties have nothing in common with it; for anti-suicidal courage presupposes suicidal excitability, and a conscious victory over it.

This of what looks, as we said, hitherward; and now briefly of what looks — yonderward.

Popular opinion and feeling maintain that to face and encounter death, wittingly and tranquilly, constitutes the essence and acme of courage; for they do not hesitate to predicate courage of the warrior when he boldly and calmly goes to meet the weaponed power of the foe; or, of the duellist who with unflinching mien awaits his antagonist's bullet or thrust; or, of the highwayman and burglar who does not shrink from the deathly dangers necessarily attendant upon his lawless pursuits; or, of even of the doomed criminal who ascends the ladder to the scaffold with steady step. And, if suchlike be by general consent accounted a sign and proof of courage, it is, as we should imagine, a fortiori a deed and an evidence of courage to outface and embrace death voluntarily and prematurely. Or, is not the „Voice of the Grave“ in and by itself usually unto flesh and blood something spectrally hoarse and bodefully startling? Does it not presuppose and require more than ordinary nerve and resolution to take, with consciousness and without compulsion, the great leap over that marge which separates the Known from the Unknown, to cross that Rubicon without chance of return by any strength or skill of ours, whatsoever the „Great Perhaps“ may turn out to be, which we defied or sought, whether a Realm of Shades,

or of Spirits, whether a Nothing, or a Tribunal? Nay, if it argue stoutness of soul in a mariner who should cut the anchor-cable of his bark which held it safe and sheltered in the familiar haven, spread its sails to the uncontrollable gale, and let it drift forth into an Ocean which no eye has explored, of which no tongue has given sure tidings, across which no guiding chart has marked a safe path, and where his frail skiff may be wind-bound into torturing travail to and fro, or suddenly shattered against some hidden rock, or engulfed into some eddying torrent: it argues, also, stoutness of soul, unless it be done in the merest imbecility of desperation or the sheerest wildness of phrensy, to take the plunge into the dark and dumb gulf of Death; and, in this point of view, yon Scipio¹⁾ was, if I mistake not, a greater hero, when he, with the self-thrust dagger lodged in his breast, proudly exclaimed „Imperator bene se habet“ than his more renowned son-in-law, Pompejus, when he humbly resigned himself to the dagger of Ptolemy's hireling.

But, perhaps, there is some better name than „Courage“ for that profound composure by force of which the human soul endures all suffering patiently, rebounds elastically after the pressure of trials, renews continuously its activities and exertions, shrinks not from the bitterest sacrifice, is not unhinged by the most sudden shock, or crushed by the most tremendous change, but „mends“ ever, and never „ends“ voluntarily. Perhaps, Christians, at least, ought rather to call it Faith, or Hope, or Charity! For, far too long and far too much are we accustomed to look for the genius and offspring of Courage on battle-fields and other high-ways of world-noticed fightings, though much selfishness, sordidness, hardness, injustice, revenge and folly should accompany it. But, where no human eye has looked, no human ear listened, no human pen made record, even in many a lonely garret, many a noisome cellar, many a meekest heart of this wide, busy, suffering world of ours doth *what we mean* find day by day and hour by hour an arena whereon, not to display, but to exercise, its great, infallible anti-suicidal strength and prowess, snatching from tempting death the dart, and refusing a premature victim to the beckoning grave. And *what we mean*, by whatsoever word yon may chuse to designate it, does, I believe, really put its veto and check upon suicide; but, as it seems to me,

¹⁾ Seneca, epist. 23.

it was reserved for a later and greater Master than Aristoteles to *teach* and *exemplify* it, to bring it home to man's full cognition and just acceptance, even Him who discerned the true and necessary „relation of Sorrow to Virtue“, the non-discernment of which was, perhaps, „the most striking defect of all the Greek moral philosophy.“

§. 27. HEDONISM, AND CYNISM.

I alluded already in §. 24 to the various schools or sects of philosophy which the Sokratic teachings about the intimate and necessary *union* of the Good and the Beautiful at early and later periods of classical antiquity gave rise to. In Plato and Aristoteles more or less essential deviations from the Master, and differences one from the other, are unmistakeable; but in the Hedonism of Aristippus and the Cynism of Diogenes of Sinope we cannot fail to discover something like a violent and complete *sundering* of the union above alluded to, a separation, as it were, of τὸ καλὸν from τὸ ἀγαθόν, and — what was, perhaps, a necessary, and, at all events, an explicable, consequence — an exaggeration, and, therefore, also a falsification, of the one and the other. Or, might we not affirm with such degree of truth as can fitly be demanded from suchlike mere general assertions that Hedonism took „the Beautiful“ for its *sole* watchword, and that Cynism inscribed *only* „the Good“ upon its banner? But, so little have we to say, or can we learn, about the bearing of the Hedonic and Cynic schools upon our immediate topic that we would have omitted this § altogether, if we were not of opinion that the two antagonistic schools which we shall have to discuss in the two next §§, Epikurism and Stoicism, ought to be regarded, the former as a *refinement* of Hedonism, and the latter as an *ennoblement* of Cynism, both, therefore, as far more genial and gifted, not, perhaps, offsprings exactly, but yet certainly near relatives, of the two equally antagonistic schools to which this brief § shall be devoted.

I. Hedonism.

Wieland has written a very long, discursive, and, as usual, voluptuous, but clever, historico-philosophical novel on Aristippus in which he incidentally lets the hetaira *Lais*, the friend and correspondent of our philosopher, write to him what follows.¹⁾ „*Warren*

¹⁾ Aristipp und seine feiner Seitgenossen, B. II, Str. 19. Cf. B. IV, Str. 3.

wir völlig gewiß, daß uns der Tod zu einer großen Verbesserung unsrer Existenz befördern werde, wie ihr andern Philosophen uns so sinnreich vorzuspiegeln wißt, wer wollte in den nackten Felsen von Serifos grau werden, wenn er nur seinen Kahn vom Ufer abzuschneiden brauchte, um in das zauberische Land der Hesperiden oder in Platon's überirdische Erde hinüber zu fahren? Denn was dieser seinen Sokrates über unsre vorgebliche Soldatenpflicht — „unsren Posten nicht eher zu verlassen, bis wir abgelöst werden“ — sagen läßt, überzeugt mich nicht; und ich sehe nicht ein, was meine Freiheit, über mich selbst zu gebieten, beschränken sollte, sobald meine dermalige Existenz nicht anders als unter unerträglichen Bedingungen verlängert werden kann.“ Aristippus, in his reply, takes no notice of this confession of the fair and frail Lais; but it is, unquestionably, consistent with the spirit of his entire teaching: what clashed with ἡδονή, not, however, only in the acceptation of lower sensuality, i. e. lust, but also in that of higher sensuality, i. e. pleasure,¹⁾ and could not be otherwise got rid of, might and ought to be escaped from, even by voluntary death, if no other means remained, or, if this means seemed the readiest and the surest. However, the only representative of this philosophic school who, as far as I am aware, affords to us any *material* in regard to our immediate topic is Hegesias, of whom and whose singular book we have already spoken at some length in §. 9 (cf. also what was said in §. 19, and what will have to be said in §. 34). Though the loss of his special suicide-inculcating book may appear no great one, or even a gain, in the eyes of the christian moralist, we, from our historical standing-point, must be allowed to express our unfeigned regret at it; for what I have been able to ascertain concerning Hegesias' pro-suicidal arguments now reduces itself to two brief sentences which Diogenes Laërtius communicates:²⁾ τὸν τε σοφὸν οὐχ οὕτω πλεονάσαι ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀγαθῶν αἰράσει, ὥς ἐν τῇ τῶν κακῶν φυγῇ, τέλος τιθέμενον τὸ μὴ ἐπιπόνως ζῆν μηδὲ λυπηρῶς — thus one of them; the other, a few lines previously, conveys a sentiment more general and sweeping, which we shall frequently encounter upon the lips of the Stoics, and to which we shall, there-

¹⁾ The Greek word was, perhaps, somewhat infelicitous, and its meaning might easily be mistaken, or degenerate, like that of the correspondent German *Zust*, *Boßlust*. Yet, it was employed, also, in a good sense as a necessary ingredient of reason and virtue as of happiness and comfort. Vide e. g. *Maximus Tyrius*, *Dias. VII* in Davis's edition. ²⁾ *S. v. Aristippus*, lib. II, c. 8, §. 9.

fore, in §. 29 have to revert more particularly: καὶ τῷ μὲν ἄφρονι τὸ ζῆν λυσιτελεῖς εἶναι· τῷ δὲ φρονίμῳ ἀδιάφορον.

In a mere literary point of view, it may be worth while to mention that a certain J. J. Rambach, not, however, the celebrated evangelical divine with the same surname and christian names, wrote a programma de Hegesia περὶ θανάτου, the perusal of which, a considerable time ago, has left the impression on my mind of its being a very tedious and flat production; for the only point in it I can now recal to my memory is that the author gave himself very much trouble to prove or urge what nobody would feel disposed to deny, or even to doubt, viz. the power of eloquence over the minds and hearts of men; and his concluding reflection is, if the note I made at the time — for the essay itself¹⁾ is no longer within my reach — be correct, as follows: „nihil tam inhumanum est, quam dicendi facultatem, a natura ad salutem hominum datam, ad pestem perniciosamque societatis humanae convertere.“ All modern Mephistophiles-natures, Sophist-disciples, political „stump-orators“ and clerical „firebrands“ would do well, I ween, to take this simple truism into their earnest consideration, a truism which even Cicero, who had himself had no small experience in the matter, has also set his seal upon.²⁾

II. Cynism.

Against Diogenes of Sinope (in the 5th and 4th centuries a. C.), the Cynic par excellence, whether thus (κυνων) styled, because of his *doglike* disregard of the decencies of external life, or, because of his *watchful* survey of the manners, and his *snarling* rebuke of what he deemed the perversities, of his fellow-men, or for some other less personal, merely accidental *local* (cf. *cynosarge* with the stoa of Zeno, the gardens of Epikuros, the academy of Plato, &c.) cause, — most modern and also ancient writers are so prejudiced that they would scarcely condescend to quote his opinions on any subject whatsoever, and, much less, esteem them worthy of serious discussion. But I will not shrink from frankly avowing myself of a very different opinion. Unto me his antagonism to intellectual presumption and sensual indulgences in their every form and feature has ever appeared to point to something wiser than that madness with which he was also reproached by some of his cotemporaries,

¹⁾ It forms the fourth dissertation, pp. 82—100, in his *Sylloge dissertationum ad rem literariam pertinentium*, 1790. ²⁾ Vide de Off. lib. II, c. 14.

to something better than the ridicule we are wont to attach to his name, to something far nearer Christianity, rightly and practically understood,¹⁾ than much of what in Greek thought and life it is our custom to admire and to extol. Most assuredly, the sum total of his life and teaching is not embodied and represented, fully and adequately, by dwelling upon a few well-known and almost proverbial eccentricities of action and exaggerations of utterance, supposing them even not in part to have been merely invented to prove that he was in verity a sort of Sokrates „gone mad“, albeit even they had sometimes a deeper and higher meaning than mere laughter is willing to ascribe to them. For instance, that request of profoundest self-sufficiency (*αὐταρξεία*) of his must have a meaning, if it could force from Aristoteles' great disciple the exclamation „were I not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes“, and many a similar sentiment on the part of Christian anachoritism, asceticism, self-denial and world-abnegation has been held up for unqualified admiration; and that „walking across the room“ of his by way of refuting Zeno's argument that there is no such thing as motion was, at least, more satisfactory than Dr. Johnson's attempt to refute Bishop Berkeley's Idealism by „forcibly striking his foot against a large stone.“ — In the spiritual world of man Puritanism, Quakerism, Carlylism, and even Rousseauism and Owenism with their practical simplicity, their contempt of luxury, their growing at forms and formulas, their appeal to inborn liberty and natural equality ever had and ever will have their right and their wisdom beside all speculations and systems about what is and remains a *mystery*, of which we „find no end, in wandering mazes lost.“ To *act* and to *be* is oftentimes more satisfactory than to argue and to reason; to feel and believe that one has in one's self the *πῶς οὖν*, and to leave the enigma of existence to solve itself in due season.

Pleasing, therefore, and self-recommendatory in my sight are the serious and high-minded representations of him which the rhetorician Dio Chrysostomos has given in very many of his Orations,²⁾ and what Epiktetos (in Arrian's Dissertations) and Demonax (in Lucian's biographical sketch of him) have uttered in his praise; and also Wieland's didactic novel,³⁾ entitled „the Relics of Diogenes“,

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. John VII, 17. ²⁾ E. g. Diogenes, or the Isthmian discourse; Diogenes, or concerning servants; Diogenes, or concerning virtue. ³⁾ Bb. XIII of his *sämmtliche Werke*.

(Nachlaß des Diogenes von Sinope), seems to me, as far as its *design* goes, worthy of approbation; but alas! as for the *execution*, — it is simply genuinely Wielandish, and, therefore, as far as a Wieland could be a Voltaire either in vivacity or frivolity, extremely flippant, shallow, and not a little disgusting. The critical Essay prefixed to it as Prefacè would have done its destined work much better, if its author had not suffixed to it his, to my taste, miserable chatterings and tales.

It is, I presume, not very probable, though Diogenes Laërtius affirms the contrary, that Diogenes of Sinope wrote any *books*, and it is more than probable, according to the dicta of modern critics, that even the few *epistles* which Diogenes Laërtius communicates, are spurious. However, certain *sayings* of his which, for aught I know to the contrary, are genuine, cannot fail to convince us of what the affinity of the Cynic school to the affiliated Stoa might induce us a priori to assume, viz. that he approved of suicide, and that, indeed, the entire Cynic school was as favorable to suicide as the Stoa, if not even more so, though less by logical argument and brilliant declamation than by off-hand speech and actual practice. The most striking and characteristic among such sayings for our purpose shall here find a place.¹⁾

Some person complained to him of his own unfitness for philosophy, whereupon Diogenes replied: „why, then, do you live, if you do not seek to live well?“ He was accustomed to say: „for life one must always have in readiness either Reason, or a Rope.“ A miser having addressed him in the following words „I'll give you something, if you can persuade me“, Diogenes replied: „if I could persuade you, I should like to persuade you to hang yourself.“ When Antisthenes, his teacher, in the agony of death, expressed the desire for a friend who should free him from pain, Diogenes offered him a dagger, accompanying the offer with the words: „this will do it.“ He exhorted Speusippus, who had become lame in his feet, to destroy himself; wrote a letter to the king of the Persians in which he asserted that the Athenians would prefer a voluntary death to servitude; and was wont to say or, somewhere says, that

¹⁾ Vide Diogenes Laërtius in the lives of Antisthenes, Speusippus, Krates, Diogenes, Metrokles, Menippus, Menedemos; Arrian's Dissertt. lib. IV, c. 1; and cf. Lucian's biographies of Demonax and Peregrinus Proteus, for all that will be stated in the remainder of this §.

there was only one means of liberty, viz. to die without repugnance, or, a voluntary death.

When the Orphic priest had been telling Antisthenes that those initiated into the Orphic mysteries would enjoy great felicity in the world to come, Antisthenes said to him: „why, then, do you not die.“

To Krates the following couplet is ascribed:

Ἐρωτα παύει λιμός, εἰ δὲ μὴ, χρόνος
ἐὰν δὲ τούτοις μὴ δύνῃ χρῆσθαι, βρόχος,

Several of the most celebrated disciples of the Cynic school died by their own hands, e. g. some of those mentioned in the last foot-note.

§. 28. EPIKURISM.

Of course, it forms no part of our present task to concern ourselves in the abstract and in general with the question, whether εὐδαιμονία, which was and remained the chief motto of Epikuros and his disciples, be a just principle of any ethical system, and the right aim of human endeavor. The mere term in and by itself (vide §. 13) has a wide and deep meaning, and, doubtless, also a loftier and purer one than most of us now-a-days, remembering the well-known „Epicuri de grege porcus“, and accustomed to the current expression „Epicureanism“, are in the habit of affixing to it; as, indeed, the life and character of Epikuros himself, if used as a commentary upon it, may and must sufficiently teach us, though we should not proceed to the investigation of his System. In Christian ages, too, much has been said *for* it, or, at least, for something not essentially unlike it, by philanthropic, or sentimental, or pietistic, or aesthetical thinkers, e. g. Helvetius, Young, Doddridge, Schiller; much, also, has been said *against* it, more especially both by hyper-religious or pseudo-religious ascetic and fanatic preachers of penance and self-mortification, and by severe thinkers and stern moralists, e. g. Kant, Fichte, Carlyle.

But, what is here, methinks, incumbent upon us, by way of introduction to, and preparation for, the testimonies we shall presently have to deal with, will be to make a few simple remarks on the probable relation, or, rather, the necessary influence, of the eudaimonistic theory in *Classical Epikurism* to and upon the topic we are now enquiring into.

1. Epikuros, as we know, limits eudaimonia to *this life alone*; and, if we conceive his eudaimonia even in the most spiritual and etherial sense, i. e. as a certain kind and measure of equilibrium and harmony between our faculties and passions, the Supreme Good is anything but easy to attain to. I will illustrate what I mean by a parallel. Cassius, who was an Epikurist, and had already meditated dispatching himself, when he fancied the conspiracy against Caesar discovered, questioned his fellow-patriot and fellow-captain, what he intended to do in case victory should decide against them on the plains of Philippi; and Markus Brutus on this occasion, after having admitted that his earlier philosophic (Platonic) views had induced him to condemn even the suicide of his maternal uncle and father-in-law, Cato Uticensis, concludes his reply by the confession *νὸν δ' ἄλλοιός ἐν ταῖς τύχαις γίνομαι.*¹⁾ Well, then, when the battle was lost, this same Brutus not only urged suicide, though in vain, upon his fellow-fugitives, and himself sought death at the hands of Strato, as we learnt in §. 10, but gave utterance to a final confession of faith which is to about the following effect:²⁾ „miserable Virtue, empty word! I exercised thee as truth, yet thou becamest Fortune's slave.“ The great Apostle of the Gentiles, on the contrary, fought from first to last what he emphatically and justly terms „the good fight“, a fight against all delusive falsehoods and juggling deceptions, a fight of resignation and sorrow, an efficacious and a victorious fight in which he overcame all despair, howsoever much he was disappointed, and triumphed over all temptations, howsoever hardly they might buffet him; and, if we question him about the principles of his sustaining morality and the source of his inward strength, he points to unseen, eternal Realities in opposition to external, transient Phenomena:³⁾ „if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable.“ We may, perhaps, think and say that Paul's theory was *not absolutely right*, that the quoted sentiment is one-sided, only half-true; but we *must* admit that its practical workings were, at all events, noble and heroic to the uttermost; — and, in the same breath, we cannot fail to allow that, howsoever pathetically sublime Brutus' confession may

¹⁾ Vitae parallelae, edid. Reiske, T. V, p. 416. ²⁾ Dio Cassius lib. 47, c. 49, and Florus IV, 7. On the various sources and forms of this exclamation vide Long's note on ch. 51 in his Translation of Plutarch's life of Brutus. ³⁾ 1 Cor. XV, 19.

seem, it involves a fearful untruth, and that, howsoever grandly tragic his death may seem, it was but the fruit of a solely eudaimonistic, and, therefore, practically dangerous and fallacious, system of Religion, Ethics, Life.

2. It lay in the very nature of such a system as Epikuros' that it should become conceived and treated the longer the more in a less elevating and spiritual manner, that the notion of εὐδαιμονία should degenerate into that of real sensuality and carnality, and that the coveting of ἀναλγησία should identify itself with flight from all and every mere discomfort and disturbance. If, now, *perfect* self-contentment and *complete* tranquillity even in the *higher* sense be difficult to compass in the sphere of morality alone, a fortiori, enjoyment of a more unstable and perishable nature, if sought as the final purpose of existence, is still more likely to become perilled, disturbed, destroyed, sooner or later, like unto „that house built upon sand, and the stream beat vehemently against it, and immediately it fell, and the ruin thereof was great.“ What should then detain the unsuccessful candidate in life? what prevent his arm from inflicting self-liberation's blow? And thus, consequently, if the Master had pronounced suicide lawful in extreme cases, the Disciples would, in the onward and downward course of the system, declare it permissible on trivial occasions, so that ultimately the practice of suicide would become far more frequent under the influence and sanction of Epikurism than Epikuros himself, perhaps, had ever intended it to become.

3. *Not to fear death* — belonged to the essentials of Epikuric eudaimonia and apalgesia, and injunctions and exhortations to this effect are of extreme frequency in the writings of the Epikurists. Of course, the mere non-fearing of death does not in any *immediate* manner involve the voluntary casting away of life. But, on the one hand, if such non-fear be constantly reiterated as a primary virtue, as a necessity of happiness, it is naturally apt to generate, gradually and imperceptibly, such indifference to life and such recklessness of death as must render the desire to seek death predominant over every natural or moral attachment to life, when any urgent or imaginary cause for departure presents itself. And, on the other hand, we might, perhaps, say that those who fear *nothing* from death, may and will easily feel tempted to expect and demand *everything* from it — in critical and trying moments.

I. Epikuros (in the 3rd cent. a. C.).

Albeit Antiquity informs us that 300 writings of one sort or the other proceeded from the fertile brain and industrious pen of this philosopher, it is quite certain that all of them have long since drifted away on the stream of time. Thence, a certain measure of uncertainty would seem to prevail on the question, whether he himself was, or was not, really favorable to suicide. But of this by and by. As the matter stands, i. e. in default of any such direct and distinct passages as we met with in e. g. Plato and Aristoteles, we cannot put forth any *definite* assertion either of others or our own; and thus the wisest and safest plan to pursue will be that of simply collecting and arranging the very scattered and somewhat vague extant ancient testimonies which I shall give in their *original* form, partly, because more or less different readings lurk in some of them, but chiefly that the student himself may the better compare and weigh their import and purport.

From the following passage which Diogenes Laërtius¹⁾ ascribes to Epikuros, it will be clear that the latter considered suicide, at all events, *permissible* under certain circumstances. Ἡ δὲ ἡ διάνοια τοῦ τῆς σαρκὸς τέλους καὶ πέρατος λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐπιλογισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα, τὸν πανταλῇ βίον παρεσχεύασε καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνου προσεδεήθημεν· ἀλλ' οὕτε ἔφυγε τὴν ἡδονήν, οὐδ' ἠνίκα τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν τὰ πράγματα παρεσχεύασεν, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐλλείπουσά τι τοῦ ἀορίστου βίου κατέστρεψεν. And two sayings of the same philosopher's which Seneca²⁾ quotes, are manifestly, also, to the effect that man *may* take away his own life. — But more than this. Epicuros considered it a species of *duty* for man to hie himself away out of life, when its ills or pains are such as appear to him insupportable. At least, the following passage in his epistle to Menoikys³⁾ seems to me to warrant *inferentially* such an interpretation. Speaking of the σοφός, he says: ὥσπερ δὲ τὸ στίον οὐ τὸ πλεῖον πάντως, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἡδιστον αἰρεῖται, οὕτω καὶ χρόνον οὐ τὸν μήκιστον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἡδιστον καρπίζεται. — Be this, however, as it may, we certainly find this view *expressly* ascribed to him in several of Cicero's critico-philosophical

¹⁾ Vol. I, p. 669. I will, however, give this longish passage according to Hübner's revision in his edition of 1831, vol. II, 599, where the scholar will find in the appended notes the multifarious existent lectiones variae quoted, though not discussed. ²⁾ Epp. 12 and 26. ³⁾ D. L. vol. I, p. 656.

writings.¹⁾ For instance, Lucius Manlius Torquatus, in his defence of Epikuros, whilst speaking of fortitude in reference to pains, says: „if they be supportable, we bear them; if not, aequo animo e vita, quum ea non placeat, tamquam a theatro exeamus.“ The wise man, according to Epikuros, „non dubitat si ita melius sit, migrare de vita“ (i. e. in general = „si melius est discedere, discedo.“). — Yet, Seneca²⁾ clearly intimates that Epikuros, nevertheless, considered suicide ridiculous, if committed from mere satiety of life, and contemptible, if committed from sheer fear of death. Epikuros himself, in the above quoted epistle to Menoikys,³⁾ speaks thus: ἀλλ' οἱ πολλοὶ (in opposition to ὁ σοφὸς) τὸν θάνατον ὅτε μὲν ὡς μέγιστον τῶν κακῶν φεύγουσιν, ὅτε δὲ ὡς ἀνάπαυσιν τῶν ἐν τῷ ζῆν ζητοῦσιν (or: τῶν ε. τ. ζῆν κακῶν ποθοῦσιν), κ. τ. λ. And Diogenes Laërtius⁴⁾ supposes, for instance, an Epikuric philosopher courageously waging warfare of resistance to Fortune or Fate (τύχῃ τε ἀντιτάξασθαι). Vide, however, what we said in §. 19 on the Epikuric Lucretius.

From these ipsissima verba of Epikuros' and these ancient testimonies the reader must draw his own inference which will, I presume, be: that our philosopher himself *relatively approved* of suicide. However, I will add the opinions of two or three modern writers.

The celebrated French philosopher and mathematician, Petrus Gassendi, has written sundry more or less lengthy and very learned books in illustration and partial vindication of ancient Epikurism, a system he had imbibed a singular admiration of. From one of them⁵⁾ I will extract the following résumé in regard to our topic. „Si enim persuasus hoc dicit, quamobrem non statim abit ipse e vita? id nimirum illi, si rem modo serio deliberavit, promptum est. Sin joco dicit, insane facit; cum hae non sint res, quae jocum admittant. Sed nempe est in ipsa quidpiam per se amabile; illique idcirco non minus objurgandi sunt, qui mortem concupiscunt, quam qui ipsam timent. Quid esse profecto tam ridiculum potest, quam mortem appetere, cum vitam tibi inquietam feceris metu mortis? aut

¹⁾ De Finibus, lib. I, c. 15 and c. 19, with which cf. lib. II, c. 19, and T. Q. lib. V, c. 40. Vide, however, §. 30. ²⁾ Epist. 24 towards the end. ³⁾ Vol. I, p. 655. ⁴⁾ Ibid. p. 653. ⁵⁾ Syntagma philosophiae Epicuri, cum refutationibus dogmatum quae contra Fidem Christianam ab eo asserta sunt, 1659. Pars III, c. XXI, p. 469.

prae vitae taedio currere ad mortem, cum genere vitae effeceris, ut eundem ad mortem foret. Id itaque potius curandum, ne tibi vita displiceat, neque dimittere eam velis, *nisi te aut Natura vocet, aut intolerabilis quispiam casus*. Ob id scilicet meditandum est, utrum commodius sit, vel mortem transire ad nos, vel nos ad mortem. Etenim malum quidem est in necessitate vivere, *sed in necessitate vivere necessitas nulla est, quando Natura nobis dedit ut aditum ad vitam unum, ita exitus ab ea multos*. Quanquam, si interdum contingat, ut fugiendum, ac properandum sit, antequam alia vis major interveniat, quae libertatem auferat recedendi: nihilominus nihil est tentandum, nisi cum apte poterit, *tempestiveque* tentari. Cum vero illud tempus, quod fuerit diu captatum, venerit, *tum demum exsiliendum est*. Neque enim par est dormire illum, qui de fuga cogitat; neque non debemus sperare etiam ex difficillimis salutarem exitum, si nec properemus ante tempus, nec cessemus in tempore.“ — To which remarks Gassendi appends the following brief notice: „quae repetitur etiam hocce loco *Impietas*, refutata fuisse habetur cum diximus esse Animos hominum immortales“ (p. 29 sqq.).

Buonafede (p. 123) asserts that Gassendi had in his *Ethicae*, lib. I, c. 1, considerably softened this construction of Epikuros' teachings; but this work I have been unable to find (does it indeed exist at all?); Stäudlin, at all events, is not clear with himself about Epikuros' tenets, inclines to regard them as antagonistic to suicide (pp. 44, 45), but yet again modifies this affirmation considerably (ibid. p. 55).

Here one brief word about Diogenes Laërtius (in the 3rd cent. p. C.) himself. Inasmuch as he has devoted the entire tenth book of his dry chronicle of philosophic systems and schools to Epikuros solely, and thus not only discusses the thinker of Gargettos at far greater length than he does any other ancient philosopher, but also speaks of his doctrines with something very like evident predilection, it has, I believe, been pretty generally supposed that he himself was an adherent of Epikurism. At all events, however, his own sentiments touching suicide are to be found singly and solely in sundry of those somewhat pointless epigrammatic epitaphs which he occasionally appends to his biographic notices of real or supposed suicidal teachers. But the said epitaphic epigrams yield, unfortunately, self-contradictory results. Thus, for instance, in those on Anaxagoras and Menedemos he seems to disapprove of suicide as a cowardly act, whereas the opposite view might be inferred from

those on Kleanthes and Aristoteles (?). By the by, one incidental remark suggests itself in connexion with the last word behind which we have placed a note of interrogation, and may, perhaps, most fitly find a place here.

If the more ancient portions of classical history in general, except in some of their broad and leading political and martial features, be oftentimes extremely uncertain and fabulous, such particulars as have reached us concerning men whose deeds were rather of a mental than of a social character, whose lives belonged rather to the Study than to the State must, perhaps, be regarded as more especially so. There was comparatively little of what is externally striking to tell about such persons, and, therefore, the temptation was all the greater to invent all sorts of strange things concerning them, since it seemed proper in those days that they should have been also in outward destiny somewhat peculiar; and the reports, through constant repetition and amplification, gradually passed over into more or less accredited records. To render ourselves fully alive to the fact that very much of what is occasionally related by ancient writers touching the career of philosophers, poets, lawgivers cannot be relied upon, unless it have strong and clear internal probability in its favor, it is only necessary to listen to all the imaginary or presumptive, fictitious or exaggerated, whether adorning or detracting, stuff we even now-a-days currently hear about what has happened to, or been done by, e. g. certain great philosophers, infidels, saints, popular preachers. Therefore, as it seems to me, we must receive only with exceeding distrust, as very many other items, so the circumstance of a suicidal end which Diogenes Laërtius and several other antique biographers so liberally ascribe to the philosophers, and also to the poets and lawgivers, of classical, more especially, Greek antiquity. On this account I did not think it worth while to mention in earlier §§ of this Chapter that some ancient writers have declared that e. g. Pythagoras and even Orpheus perished by their own hands, that Speusippus, the nephew and successor of Plato, inflicted death upon himself, that the death of Aristoteles was voluntary, and that many modern writers, besides the church-fathers and later bigots who eagerly snatched up whatever tale seemed to tarnish the fame of classical paganism, have given credence to such statements, e. g. Tiedemann as regards Orpheus and Pythagoras, Buhle as regards Aristotle. Yet, a small measure of

criticism would often suffice to refute the said tales quite satisfactorily. I will here, by way of exemplification, limit myself to Aristotle, since Stahr's very accurate and detailed, though, perhaps, somewhat partially composed, life of the Stagirite affords us very copious materials, *several pages*¹⁾ of which are devoted to our very question. The historical evidence which Stahr adduces and examines is, doubtless, such as might justify him in rejecting decidedly the story or, rather, stories about the Stagirite's having either poisoned or drowned himself; but I cannot agree with him either that we should have to view his suicide, if he had committed it, as "*ein Mafel*", or that, because Aristoteles in his writings had declared suicide "*verächtlich*", he cannot be supposed to have become guilty of it himself. For, on the one hand, we must suppose that in by far the greater number of instances the ancient writers themselves, in whose sight suicide was laudable, not a stigma, intended their tales to be panegyrical rather than otherwise; and, on the other hand, in ancient just as little as in modern times can we reasonably take for granted that, because a philosopher denounces this or that in his writings, he will, therefore, in time of need and test act up to his own theory. Try, for instance, our own sort of Aristotle, Lord Bacon of Verulam, by his own philosophy, and — what a falling off in action, practice, the man from his thoughts, precepts, books! —

II. Pliny the Elder (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

It is true, the only extant work of this studious man's and voluminous writer's, the thirty seven books of Natural History, from which we have already more than once quoted and to which we shall have occasion to refer more than once again in the sequel, contains researches upon or, rather, compilations and anecdotes about, the history and philosophy of nature, and is very far from exhibiting to us its author exactly as a speculative thinker on ethical questions. Thence, there exists some doubt as to whether he was, or was not, an Epikurist.²⁾ The greater number of modern writers, however, would seem to have decided this question affirmatively;³⁾ and to me individually it appears scarcely possible to peruse either

¹⁾ pp. 151—156 of *Thell* I of his already quoted *Aristotelia*. ²⁾ Vide e. g. *Krug*, *Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, B. III, pp. 271, 272. ³⁾ Vide e. g. *Brodhans' Conversationslexikon* s. v. *Epikur*, and Good in the laborious dissertation he has prefixed to his translation of *Lucretius*, *passim*.

the ridicule with which he treats the notion of the Deity's concerning himself about human affairs,¹⁾ or the boldness with which he denies the immortality of the soul,²⁾ without inferring that his opinions on those main problems at all events were identical with the tenets which characterized the Epikuric school. And, indeed, I have felt myself, after a perusal of the said 37 books, somewhat at a loss to comprehend the following verdict, which the late Hartley Coleridge,³⁾ the kind-hearted and strong-brained, but wayward and unfortunate son of a greater, but not a better, sire, pronounced on the work under mention, could exactly mean: „but the highest recommendation of Pliny is his moral wisdom, his almost christian piety, his intelligent humanity. Of all the Romans he was the least of a Roman, and approximated nearest to the pure idea of a man.“ To the younger Pliny, methinks, this dictum would far more aptly apply. —

As regards our immediate topic, too, Pliny's views are Epikuric, nay, almost more than Epikuric, i. e. somewhat strongly and absolutely worded, because more or less briefly put forth and, as it were, only casually introduced. Two of his pro-suicidal ipsissima dicta we have already adduced and commented upon (§§. 14 and 18) than which nothing can be clearer, cooler, more decisive; but his deliberate conviction of the perfect lawfulness of suicide is likewise uttered in the following two passages,⁴⁾ according to the second of which Nature herself has kindly supplied man with various poisons for the very purpose of helping him to a quiet, painless, decorous mode of self-destruction. „Vitam quidem non adeo expetendam censemus, ut quoque modo trahenda sit. Quisquis es talis, aegre mori, etiam non obscoenus vixeris, aut nefandus. Quapropter hoc primum quisque in remediis animi sui habeat: ex omnibus bonis, quae homini tribuit natura, nullum melius esse tempestiva morte: idque in ea *optimum*, quod illam sibi quisque praestare poterit.“ — „Illa (i. e. Natura) medicas fundit herbas, et semper homini parturit. Quin et venena nostri misertane instituisse credi potest: ne in taedio vitae fames, mors terrae meritis alienissima, lenta nos consumeret tabe: ne lacerum corpus abrupta dispergerent: ne laquei torqueret poena praepostera, incluso spiritu, cui quaeretur exitus: ne

¹⁾ Lib. II, §. 5. ²⁾ Lib. VII, §. 56. ³⁾ Lives of the illustrious worthies of Yorkshire, p. 301, in a note on the life of Roger Ascham. ⁴⁾ Lib. XXVIII, §. 2, and Lib. II, §. 63.

in profundo quæsitâ morte, sepultura pabulo fieret: ne ferri cruciatu scinderet corpus. Ita est, miserta genuit id, cujus facillimo haustu, illibato corpore, et cum toto sanguine exstingueremur, nullo labore, sitientibus similes: qualiter defunctos non volucris, non fera attingeret, terræque servaretur, qui sibi ipsi perisset. Verum fateamur, *terra nobis malorum remedium genuit*, nos illud vitæ fecimus venenum.“

It seems natural enough that our Naturalist should have drawn attention to the existence of poisonous herbs, since, perhaps, vegetable poisons are, for reasons I need not here assign, the *first* which man in a rude state discovers, whence, for instance, the North American Indians (vide the next Section) would seem to dispatch themselves more especially by means of them; and poison in one shape or the other was evidently a favorite mode of self-destruction among, at least, the ancient Greeks (vide what will be said in the next Chapter e. g. on the state-potion at Massalia); moreover, there are, no doubt, innumerable vegetable poisons which kill quickly and safely, as well as such as kill in a torturous and gradual manner. But it does seem strange that our Naturalist, if he had been exactly what Hartley Coleridge affirms, should have fixed, and laid so much stress, upon this purpose of nature in her productions of the vegetable kingdom rather than upon the prodigality with which she has in roots, berries, leaves, fruits and flowers supplied antidotes to almost every disease, means for the sustenance of human life, and beauty and refreshment, hues and odors to cheer the heart of man and enliven the scene of his earthly career. Far more piously even Cicero incidentally says:¹⁾ „nec tam fuit hominum generi infensa atque inimica natura, ut corporibus tot *res salutare* invenerit.“ — On one clause in this passage of Pliny's, viz. his horror of self-strangulation, we have commented already in §. 9; and as regards his predilection for autochiria *venefica* I will merely remark that we shall find (vide §. 32) Plotinus expressly cautioning his disciples against employing *poisons* as a means of voluntary exit.

When Montaigne²⁾ construes a passage (lib. XXV, §. 3) into a declaration on the part of Pliny that man has a *right* to kill himself, he, I may in passing remark, errs, since our author is there simply and solely speaking of an illness in consequence of which one *was* in the habit of killing one's self. We might, however,

¹⁾ T. Q. IV, c. 27. ²⁾ Essais, liv. 2, ch. 3.

compare the concluding words of a narrative of his (lib. XXXVI, §. 24) which we shall give in full in §. 35, on which same occasion he embraces the opportunity of scoffing at the fear which the Roman suicides of that early age entertained about the fate of their senseless corpses.¹⁾

III. Lucian of Samosata (in the 2nd p. C.).

I was for some time in doubt with myself, whether to assign a place to Lucian at all in this Chapter, since he certainly can scarcely be said to belong to philosophers in the strictist sense of this term, or, if a place must be assigned to him, whether it should be in the ranks of the Epikurists exactly. But he is, on the one hand, too interesting and, likewise, too notorious a writer to be passed by in utter silence, since, at least, *one passage* in his works touches upon our topic *expressly*, and has, if I mistake not, occasionally been quoted as an anti-suicidal testimony, and since, moreover, we shall have to revert to him in a later Section as regards his mockery of the so-called suicidal tendencies and practices of the early Christians; and, on the other hand, though he palpably will-of-the-wisped it, as it were, from one philosophic hierophant or system of philosophy to another, as humor or fancy, experience or opportunity might chance to lead him, and laughed in his sleeve almost at each by turns, I incline to believe Preller, who has written a very elaborate article on our satyrist in which he, whilst enquiring into *his position to philosophy and to his cotemporary philosophers*, says:²⁾ „in his later years, Lucian appears to have given himself up entirely to Epikuros and his school, of which he speaks repeatedly (in his Alexander) with quite especial reverence.“ However, taking all in all, we must, I humbly presume, view Lucian's position even to Epikurism as rather negative than positive, i. e. if he laughs less at it, he does not therefore believe firmly in it, as, indeed, is generally the case with minds and characters of his complexion, in which, more or less Voltaire-like, wit and frivolity form both quantitatively and qualitatively the prominent ingredients. Indeed, Preller says in a more beautiful manner something to the same effect:³⁾ „the positive element of faith and conviction is wanting to him; he has no

¹⁾ But the sentence is somewhat obscurely worded, and e. g. Grosse has proposed to read *erubescens* or even *evanescens* instead of the textual *erubescens*. ²⁾ In Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, B. IV, p. 1174 and cf. p. 1179. ³⁾ p. 1176.

enthusiasm, but scoff and laughter. He belongs to those negative and critical minds which so frequently make their appearance in times of transition and baited development. They purify the air like spring-storms, loosen the soil and prepare for something new whilst annihilating what is old. But, wheresoever the New itself is to come, positive minds are needed." However, to our especial topic.

Most of my readers are, doubtless, aware that a certain Peregrinos Proteus — a personage in no respect very much better, and in some respects very much worse, than Smollet's fictitious Peregrine Pickle —, was a sort of Jack of all Trades in the days of Lucian. In spite of his flagrant immoralities and his intrinsic utter worthlessness, he peddled also in the conversion to Christianity, and in the profession of fervent christian piety and zeal. There were, doubtless, even in that age too, despite the ideal, but partially imaginary, picture which we are in the habit of fondly framing unto ourselves of the early state of the Christians, many among them who were silly enough to fancy that to confess their creed and belong to their party was not only a *sine qua non* of moral excellence, but likewise per se an evidence of superior merit which constituted an undeniable and irresistible claim upon their benevolence and esteem. Thence, we need not wonder, if — and this was, doubtless, really the case — many were attracted into the christian community, partly, in the hope of rendering their previous vices and follies, whether black or venial, forgotten, and, partly, for the purpose of securing to themselves protection and support in misfortune and poverty. In this respect, our hero may be said to have been a very striking prototype and a most exact pendant of numerous canting Hypocrites, Jewish converts and psalm-singing Methodists in our own time and country. As they but too speedily enlist the sympathy, and — what is a natural consequence, and also of far more importance to them — gain the effectual *pecuniary* support, of many a guileless and short-sighted evangelical lady or proselytizing parson, and even succeed, though distinguished neither by talents, birth, station, amiability, or beauty, in becoming noticed and spoken of as something apart and distingué, as objects of pious fashion and themes for tea-table chatter, as the ephemeral and local „observed of all observers“ —: so he.

Peregrinos' career having been as checquered and harlequin-like (hence, I ween, his cognomen of Proteus) as that of nefarious im-

postors of the Cagliostro and Casanova school, style and stamp is wont to be, he made his final exit out of this world by publicly burning himself to death, not only à la Hercules on mount Oeta, but before the eyes of a vast multitude of curious spectators, somewhat in the style of the Indians Sphinâs and Sramânâcharyas (vide the next Section), at Olympia anno 165 p. C., of which tragi-comedy Lucian was himself an eye-witness.

Lucian, now, undertook to compose upon him a sort of what we might in modern parlance term oraison funèbre, which species of literary performance has in all ages been celebrated rather for eloquence than for veridicality, as the students of even a Bossuet's and a Massillon's master-pieces of this kind cannot fail to know; and in this same oration the following passage occurs: ¹⁾ ἐχρῆν δὲ, οἶμαι, μάλιστα μὲν περιμένειν τὸν θάνατον, καὶ μὴ δραπατεύειν ἐκ τοῦ βίου — a dictum by which he seems, at first sight, to denounce suicide in somewhat Sokratic or Aristotelian fashion, and which is, therefore, wholly anti-epicuric. We must, however, pay attention not only to Lucian's general scope, but also to the particular context of this passage. Lucian designed to render Peregrinos' life and death, his entire character and conduct ridiculous and contemptible: wherefore he, as it was likely and natural for the like of him to do, that he might attain to his end more surely and thoroughly, branded even the *suicidal* exit of Peregrinos, objecting, however, less to the suicide *as such* than to the *manner* which our spiritual charlatan had given the preference to; for Lucian distinctly adds that, if a man must need kill himself, he ought to do so *in private*, not before a numerous concourse of people, and, moreover, not *burn* himself, there being many other more appropriate and sensible methods of self-dispatchment.

It is not of the slightest importance for our present purpose, whether the general or specific statements of Lucian's concerning Peregrinos be credible or the contrary. To me they appear, in spite of much that has been brought forward to invalidate them, to have every mark of internal, and every requisite of external, verisimilitude in their favor.²⁾ We have here, of course, only to deal with the

¹⁾ De morte Peregrini, §. 21, Opera, edid. Lehmann, T. VIII, p. 276.

²⁾ Wieland has written twenty very able pages „über die Glaubwürdigkeit Lucians in seinen Nachrichten vom Peregrinus“, and the result he arrives at is to the same effect. Vide Lucian's *sämmtliche Werke*, Th. III, p. 91ff.

said statements as far as our topic is concerned; and in this respect also another passage must interest us. Speaking of the Christians at this period, Lucian says with not only veritable, but even more than needful, Epicuric mockery:¹⁾ „for these poor wretches (κακοδαίμονες) have taken into their heads that they will become immortal, body and soul, and live unto all eternity: whence it comes, then, that they despise death and that many of them even run voluntarily into its hands“ (καταφρονοῦσι τοῦ θανάτου, καὶ ἐκόντας αὐτοὺς ἐπιθιδόασιν οἱ πολλοί) Similar testimonies we shall hear from Epictetos and Markus Aurelius; but of these on a later occasion. — What is here incumbent upon as is merely to show from other writings of Lucian's that the above anti-suicidal utterances of his had a mere momentary controversial aim, and were anything but sincerely meant in abstracto.

Lucian has penned a most graphic, and even pathetic memoir on a certain Demonax, a cotemporary and friend of his, an eclectic philosopher who more or less wavered between Sokrates and Diogenes, and who, when he, being then nearly 100 years old, perceived that he was „not any longer able to help himself, addressed to those around him the verses with which the criers are wont to announce the termination of the public games: „the combat, the giver of the fairest prizes, is ended, and the hour bids to while no longer.“ From this moment, he abstained from food or drink, and departed out of the world as cheerfully as all who had known him had always seen him during his whole life.“ And, what is Lucian's estimate of this suicidal philosopher? We will let him speak for himself.²⁾ „It is no more than just that I should erect a monument also to Demonax in order that he may continue to live, as far as I have power to make him do so, in the memory of good men, and that the noblest of our youth who incline to devote themselves to philosophy may not be compelled to form themselves only after ancient examples, but also may find in this cotemporary of ours the best of all philosophers I know (ἄριστον, ὃν οἶδα ἐγὼ, φιλοσόφων γεγόμενον), a model of perfection and a goal for their imitation.“ „In general, it was his greatest care to render himself as much as possible independent of all other things; and, as soon as he found that he could no longer be sufficient unto himself, he went volun-

¹⁾ Ibid. p. 271. ²⁾ Demonactis vita, vol. V, pp. 221, 223.

tarily out of the world, bequeathing unto the best among the Greeks copious material for discoursing a long time about him."

Also, passim in his multifarious writings, he invariably speaks of suicide, when it incidentally comes into his way, either with indifference, or with approbation. Indeed, it would be a work of supererogation to collect and cite the numerous passages to this effect. I will, therefore, content myself with referring the reader to e. g. his essay on the „runaway slaves“, in which the cases of Peregrinos and Empedokles are discussed by Jupiter and Apollo; and to the 10th and 21st of his „dialogues of the dead“, in which Mercury specifically lauds Menippus, and Cerberus Menippus and Diogenes, for having died a voluntary death.

§. 29. STOICISM.

Whereas it would be perfectly possible, and quite excusable, to study and even to develop the chief elements of the previously discussed philosophical systems without paying any particular attention, or, perhaps, any attention at all, to the topic of our present enquiry, it would be utterly out of the question to review the tenets of the Stoa without having our especial theme ever and anon forced upon our consideration; for the frequency of the utterance about, and the zealotry of the advocacy of, suicide constitute such an essential ingredient of Stoicism that, whenever we think or speak of the latter in general, such utterance and advocacy present themselves to our mind involuntarily and as a matter of course. The individual testimonies of the coryphaei of this renowned school we will, however, not introduce until we shall previously have endeavored to familiarize ourselves with the main links in that pro-suicidal chain which the Stoics wound round their argumentative and practical doctrines; but I must observe in advance that the chief extant writings of the disciples of Zeno are so markedly characterized by mere similitudinary declamatoriness that one experiences considerable difficulty in tracing out their axiomata and reconciling one's self to their syllogisms even touching so clear and weighty a topic.

1. Not unfrequent in the works of the Stoics is the assertion that life and death belong to things *indifferent*, ἀδιάφορα, an assertion not by any means peculiar to the Stoics, since we find something either identical with it, or very similar to it, ascribed e. g. to

Thales, to Pyrrho, to Aristippus even, at least, to the Cyrenaic school. The assertion is, however, even in matters trivial, in matters merely of taste and feeling, comparatively absurd; and it becomes worse than merely absurd, when applied to matters in which duty has a part, to matters moral and momentous; for, if we place any relation of life sharply and fully before ourselves, we shall, surely, discover some point in it which renders one or the other mode of action a matter more or less consonant with, or contrary to, duty: and a fortiori, when the question proposed is that of either voluntarily quitting life altogether or remaining longer in it! The Life of man is not an *ἀδιαφορον*, unless the self-conscious spirit of man itself be so; for it is the ethical manifestation of this spirit; nor is Death an *ἀδιαφορον*, if Life be none; for it is the essential withdrawal of those outward materials in which the individual human mind exercised its inward activities. We read in Diogenes Laërtius' life of Thales that, when he was asked, why he, then, did not die? his reply was: because it is all alike. The said reply is, despite its celebrity, nugatory; yet, it is, at all events, consistent, far more reasonable and legitimate, at least, than the Stoic answer by — vindication and execution of suicide; for the emphatic glorification of suicide as fitting and dutious in various circumstances manifestly involved a decided *preference* of death to life, and the very action of self-slaughter seemed to give the lie to one of the principles from which its rationality and lawfulness were deduced.

2. In the writings of the Stoics we find, if I mistake not, the Befitting (*τὸ κατῆκον*) invariably used as synonymous with Duty, with Virtue, and, consequently, the suitableness, decorum of an action formed the highest and, as it were, the only standard of its right or wrong. Thus Stoic ethics could scarcely fail to arrive at something extremely *relative*, at something more or less *subjective*; for fitness easily identified itself with what is dependent upon circumstances, or conditioned by individual character, and what befits might as occasion required quickly pass over into what happened to please. An example will make this clear. When Cicero (vide the next §) wished to examine, whether the Stoic Cato's voluntary death was right or wrong, he, in the genuine spirit and after the veritable fashion of the Stoa itself, limits himself simply to the investigation, whether his suicide was, or was not, in harmony with his character, as if this were the *only* thing of importance, the *sole* morally de-

termining point. Of course, it was, and so is every suicide deliberately undertaken, calmly committed; but such sort of consonance (convenience) does not by any means necessarily establish ethical justifiableness; for even a very worthy and lofty character may be only a *one-sided* development of human nature, only a but *too full* development in a certain direction, and the harmony of a particular action may be rather with the inferior than the superior elements of such a character. Thus, for instance, Cato's suicide harmonized, we might say, with what was stubborn, haughty, self-sufficient, &c. in him; and, inasmuch as these specific characteristics in his own particular nature prevented it from being = Virtue, the fact that death appeared to him, or really was, more in harmony with his especial case than life, is very far from demonstrating that even such suicide is right, let alone — any and every suicide. The act at issue seems to me too momentous to be made dependent upon a position which is at all times questionable and fallible, and frequently evinces itself as dangerous and erroneous.

3. I said just now advisedly „let alone — any and every suicide.“ It is true, when we read in the Stoic system that man is lord or master also over his own life, this is said apparently only of the *wise man* (ὁ σόφος); but who, then, is a wise man? Not only, as matter of course, all Stoics as such, but a vast number of other people besides; for, as regards the question of suicide at least, the Stoical writers were anything but exclusive or sectarian, so that not only does the wise man κατ' ἐξοχήν, i. e. the Stoic, commit suicide in case of need, but, as it were, the very commission of suicide would seem to be proof sufficient that a man was wise. Thence, for instance, Seneca¹⁾ extends his manifold wordy, but brilliant, eulogies to all sorts of suicides, whether they were Stoics or not, educated or not, from Cato and Marcellinus down to the young Spartan and the captive German. According to such a test of wisdom, therefore, many a person, for no other reason and in no other manner particularly „wise“, might feel tempted to imagine himself a veritable σόφος, when and because the desire and courage to quit life voluntarily had seized upon him, — just as, in modern days, among ourselves, perhaps, more especially, many a person

¹⁾ Vide e. g. epp. 70, 77, 4, 13, 24. 66, 67, 71; de prov. lib. I, and de consol. ad Marciam, c. 1 and c. 22.

fancies himself religious, when and because he chances to feel inclined and disposed to conform unto some merely outward, more or less dubious, action, e. g. regular attendance at church and sacrament, which christian theologians prescribe as pious and godly.

4. Nor is, indeed, a sort of theologic unction altogether wanting even in the Stoic view of the question under consideration; for the Divinity is drawn into the subject, here really a species of „Deus ex machina“; for, if I do not very much err, the matter runs thus: God = Nature = Reason = man's own wish, choice, will. Let us look at this more closely. If the „wise man“ be so positioned or mooded that to quit life voluntarily seems to him in accordance with Nature, Reason, Virtue, Decorum, he does quit life voluntarily; for to remain in life then would be simply of the two things between which he has to choose the one more opposed to τὸ κατ'ἄλκον; indeed, by voluntarily abandoning life he does nothing more than liberate the soul from the body, from those untoward environments of temporal existence which disturb and hinder the soul in its higher efficacy, in its being, moving and working κατὰ τὸ κατ'ἄλκον; nay, when the activity of his (Stoic) life is checked, or its purpose frustrated, the Deity itself summons him to depart hence, and not to obey such a summons is a proof of either ridiculous and contemptible cowardice or undignified and degrading animal attachment to sensuousness and terrestrialism. And this same Deity? — We Christians, in general, whilst endeavoring to realize unto ourselves what we call a *personal* and an *objective* God, i. e. just such a God as appears to us necessary as comfort, when misfortunes strike and bend us, just such a God as appears to us requisite as guidance, when the problems of life and the intricacies of society perplex and confound us, separate Him entirely from our individual selves, abstract and intensify Him into the complex of every deepest and purest mental and moral quality we can conceive of, and thus bid whatever is human and finite in us bow down in humility, trust, patience, resignation before decrees into which we cannot clearly see, before destinies which we cannot fully control.

Whatsoever Moses and the Prophets, Jesus and the Apostles uttered concerning the Power and Wisdom, the Love and Mercy of a Supreme Being, our Maker and our Father, we readily attach in our thoughts, feelings, our faith and life to this our God, and whatsoever stands written in the sublimest and devoutest passages of the

Old and the New Testament we would fain believe and take as mandate and precept from Him. The question with us is not, whether all our thinking and believing, howsoever profound and fervent, can create such a God, if He exist not: unto our Faith, our Love, our Hope He was, is, will be; — and, if the ever-recurring question in earth's labyrinth be: „why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?“ — the hushing voice ever-resounding from church- and chapel-bells is: „O put thy trust in God; for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.“ Therefore, we do connect something real and practical with our speech about „forgetting“ or „obeying“ God; we, at all events, mean thereby something perfectly intelligible to all thoughtful and earnest men; — and, to come to our immediate subject, it is not a hollow phrase with us, if we say that man ought to be reconciled to live, because our breath is God's gift, and to die, because withdrawal of that breath is God's deed. — But very differently, I ween, this matter stands with the Stoic philosophers of classical antiquity. If we, too, may and must be said occasionally and partially to accommodate God unto ourselves, they may and must be said to have done so far more frequently and wholly. If the common people degraded the Divinities into beings with human forms, passions, sinnings, the subtle thinkers spiritualized them into, as it were, philosophic ideas and noble sentiments, and, therefore, the casuistries of their own brain and the passions of their own heart easily became unto them what they termed „the voice, or command, of God.“ In other words, their God was *subjective* solely, *personal*, as it were, in a non-theologic sense; their own Reason and Sensation were God. And, if it be thus, as it, I think, is, the Stoic conception and representation of committing self-destruction with the approbation, on the summons, at the bidding of the Deity means, when given in faithful paraphrastic translation into Christian diction, neither more nor less than doing so, when man has „good and solid reasons for preferring death to life“, doing so „with due reflection“, doing so, because he, after due reflection, sees and feels himself induced, controlled, compelled to deem the act a moral and social „necessity.“ What corresponded with what was passing in the Stoic's own soul, what responded to such things as his own inclinations whispered unto him — was, as far, at least, as our subject is concerned, God!

5. But, to return to that same Stoic saying that „man is master and lord of his own life.“ In dozens of passages of the writings of the Stoics we meet with the phrases „there are many outlets out of life“, and „the door is open.“ Neither sorcerer nor sage, neither oracle nor philosophy are needed to certify so self-evident and undeniable a fact, which, moreover, may be a consolation, if you like, but which is, most assuredly, not by any means an argument, and has, indeed, not even the most remote bearing upon the definition and fixation of duty. How much else has not Nature placed in our power! The question, however, is: for what purposes, and under what circumstances, may man employ that which external possibilities have placed within his reach? Thou *canst* slay thy neighbour as well as thyself, if his life as well as thy own be unbearable or inconvenient unto thee; but *mayst* thou *therefore*? But this only by the way. To be „lord and master of life“, in the deeper and deepest, true and truest sense of this term, even according to the Stoic acceptation also, implies — not only to be able to cast it off —, but, likewise, to lord it over, and to master down, those very passions or sufferings which might otherwise, if allowed to gain sovereign sway in us, induce us to cast it off. And herein, methinks, lies the radical blunder, the *πρωτον ψευδος*, of the entire Stoic system, as far as our topic is concerned, and the tenet of the admissibility and necessity of suicide becomes a paradoxon, questionable on this very ground, objectionable for this very reason. Even Shakspeare saw this, and much else, not because he knew Greek or Latin, which he, probably, did not know, but because he knew the human mind and heart better than one half of the metaphysicians of ancient and modern times put together, when he condensed his estimate and critique of this element in the Stoic system into the following two lines which Cassius addresses to Brutus:¹⁾

„Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.“

Indeed, the Stoics, like sundry hyper-religionists of our own day, demanded *too much*, and — performed *too little*.

They demanded too much. — That well-known Stoic *αυταρχεια*, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, self-dependence, self-reliance, is, doubtless, beautiful and noble; for, if man's character is to be built

¹⁾ Julius Caesar, IV, 3.

up, he can lay a solid foundation only in what pertains to, his veritable inmost self; but it is more easily postulated than acquired. That well-known Stoic *ἀταξία*, the total indifference unto, and exemption from, the impressions and influences of all external things, is, doubtless, something earnest and sublime; for, if life's business is to be done, man must render himself as independent as may be of incidental environments. But, it is, on the one hand, manifestly an utter *impossibility* either to find *perfect αὐταξία* in one's self, or to observe *perfect ἀταξία* towards what is out of one's self; and, on the other hand, it lies almost in the nature of things that, if we make our claims too high, we, finding it quite beyond our strength to fulfil them literally and completely, in despair and by subterfuges leave even such measure of them unaccomplished as might really be attained to. And thus, indeed, the Stoics did. They performed too little. — If there be any truth whatsoever in the Stoic notion of the almost superhumanly lofty strength of the self, such an exalted consciousness ought, surely, in and by itself to have inspired that quantity and quality of reverence which would have militated against any rude attempt at destroying such Self. If the adherent of the Stoa was rendered so self-sufficiently happy by the wisdom and strength of his philosophy: why, then, should he at all even wish to die? why, a fortiori, should he be so ready to evoke death? If the greater number of the *coryphaei* of the Stoic school themselves, teachers, e. g. Zenon and Kleanthes, and disciples, e. g. Cato and Brutus, did slay themselves, and slay themselves, some of them at least, e. g. Zenon and Kleanthes, for comparatively insignificant causes, and such individual cases became again in their turn *precedents* of the Stoic Law and Gospel, stars of dazzling magnitude which guided others on to the worship and imitation of the deed: then, methinks, either the Stoic theory contradicted itself somehow, or the Stoic practice was sadly at variance with the Stoic principles! In such wise does over-strained dogmatism beget absurd action: argument having overleapt nature, nature avenges herself by over-leaping argument.

I know well that this representation of the matter is not so abstract, scientific, scholastic as it might have been; but, if the reader be organized and mooded like myself, he will be as sick and tired as I am of mere learned phrases and logical tiltings, and desire and endeavor to seize upon, and set forth, what comes home to the

practical understanding and to our common feelings; and the main value all ancient classical thinking has for me, lies not in its soaring flights or its dexterous fencing but, rather, in its battling and struggling with what concerns even the humblest and most illiterate among us, with thoughts that pass ever and anon through the most uncultivated brain, with feelings that ever and anon rise up in the most unsophisticated heart, in a word, with what is humanizing and realizable. And here again, as in Epikurism, I purposed and endeavored solely and simply to point out the easily recognizable *vulnerable* spot in the system relative to the shafts of voluntary death. The *world* with its enjoyments was no protecting shield to the Epikurists; the *self* with its efficiencies was no shielding armor to the Stoics: outside of the visible earth, and above the mortal self, exist and work — Eternity, God, and they, or nought, can guard, as I think, to the uttermost tried and tempted man against the subtle and ready foe of whom we speak. — —

Before we proceed to adduce and analyse in detail the special teachings of those ancient writers whom we may regard as the capita repræsentativa of the Stoic school in regard to our topic, I will make mention of sundry general utterances in which the pith of the doctrine would seem to be contained. First of all, then, the tasteless and uncritical Diogenes Laërtius treats us in his life of Zenon¹⁾ to the following brief summary of the (five) motives which the Stoics declared to be justificatory of self-inflicted death: εὐλόγως²⁾ τέ φασιν ἐξάξειν ἑαυτὸν τοῦ βίου τὸν σοφὸν, καὶ ὑπὲρ πατρίδος καὶ ὑπὲρ φίλων, καὶ ἐν σκληροτέρα γένηται ἀλγηδὼν ἢ πηρώσειν ἢ νόσοις ἀνιάτοις: the two first of which would appear to answer to what we should rather call self-devotion than suicide, whereas the three last must, I presume, be understood of mental or bodily suffering or injury, consequently: grief, mutilation, disease, and, perhaps, such affections of the mind as we should denominate derangement, insanity; at least, Bishop Jeremy Taylor³⁾ and the Neo Platonist Thomas Taylor,⁴⁾ when enumerating the five kinds (τρόπους) of a rational exit from Olympiodorus (§. 24), whose enume-

¹⁾ Lib. VII, segm. 130. ²⁾ By the way I may remark that Gronovius in his notes on Grotius de jure belli ac pacis declares the adjective εὐλογος = εὐλόγητος, laudabilis; but, no doubt, what was understood by τὸ εὐλογον was that of which a rational account can be given, for which a good reason can be assigned. ³⁾ Works, vol. III, p. 421. ⁴⁾ Translation of Plato, vol. IV, pp. 258, 259.

ration Creuzer¹⁾ has failed to give completely, include „natural madness“ or „delirium“ in the list, and in the Stoic writers whose testimonies I shall presently bring forward, I have sought in vain for any mention of insanity as a plea or motive for self-destruction. Jeremy Taylor: for the private good, for public necessity to avoid a tyrant's snare, natural madness, intolerable bodily affliction, and extreme poverty; Thomas Taylor: self-sacrifice, delirium, disease, poverty, the compulsion to divulge arcana (by which last word, I presume, public or private secrets, not doctrines of a religious character, so-called Mysteries, which Stoicism did not possess, must be understood). In Stobaeus, likewise, we find the following generic statement about the Stoics in regard to our theme.²⁾ Φασὶ δὲ ποτε καὶ τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ βίου τοῖς σπουδαίοις καθήκοντως κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους, (τοῖς δὲ φαύλοις μονήν ἐν τῷ ζῆν, εἰ μὴ μάλλοιεν ἔσεσθαι σοφοί, οὔτε γὰρ τὴν ἀρετὴν κατέχειν ἐν τῷ ζῆν, οὔτε τὴν κακίαν ἐκβάλλειν τοῖς δὲ καθήκουσι καὶ τοῖς παρὰ τὸ καθήκον μετρεῖσθαι τὴν τε ζωὴν καὶ τὸν θάνατον). — We will, however, now scrupulously consult those Stoic writers, entire works of whose are extant; and such writers chance to be one and all *Romans*, though the productions of two of them are composed in Greek. Among these Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Epiktetos form, as it were, the triumvirate; and they would, perhaps, suffice, nay, more than suffice, for our purpose. Yet, I have not been able to resist the temptation of letting Tacitus and the younger Pliny follow in their train, a „noble couple“ of men who, though not exactly systematic philosophers, were, nevertheless, philosophic thinkers, whose voices upon ethico-human questions have a weighty sound in our Schools and Colleges, and to whose very names, even for christian posterity, a singular measure of significance and influence attaches.

I. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

This writer, whose style aesthetical scholarship blames, though everything with him is little more than mere phrase in relation to his veritable self, as if he, like a modern Frenchman, had sought everything in style, was, as we know, Nero's teacher, and also Nero's victim; we likewise know that Hieronymus immoderately extols him, and that the pseudo-gospels have fabled him into a correspon-

¹⁾ Vol. III, p. 62 of his edition of Plotinus. ²⁾ *Eclogae physicae et ethicae*, edid. Gaisford, T. II, p. 603. Vide, however, §. 31.

dent of St. Paul's, and even into a Christian; yet, even beside his degenerate imperial pupil there is so little, in my estimation, at least, about him that could deserve our sympathy, affection, esteem that we might almost venture to affirm that he himself had partly sown that seed which he himself was subsequently called upon to reap. Moral grandeur and emphatic magniloquence of written philosophy side by side with¹⁾ avarice, servility, sensuality, hypocrisy! Verily, he is one of the most striking and startling among the many historical proofs of the truism that it is so much easier to declaim loftily than to live nobly. His end, however, is in more respects than one worthy of record, and will require no comment of ours.²⁾ „He wished that also his wife Paulina might die with him, affirming that *he had taught her the art of despising death*, and that she would gladly follow him into death. He, therefore, had her veins opened (cf. §. 9). But, because he died off only slowly, and the soldiers wished his death accelerated, he died yet before her, and Paulina was saved. However, he did not cause her veins to be opened, until he had corrected the writings which he had composed, and had deposited them with friends, because he feared that they might get into Nero's hands and be destroyed.“

Seneca was, evidently, in the main a Stoic, though at the same time somewhat eclectic as regards his ethical materials and theorems. In his Epistles, for instance, he frequently expresses himself to the effect that Epikuros is just as welcome an authority to him as Zeno or Kleanthes. Nay, he even prides himself, more or less, upon having borrowed whatsoever chanced to be consonant with his own convictions from every available source of Greek speculation, and was thus, as it were, a sort of crum-picker at the banquets of the Wise. However, on the theme we are discussing he was a genuine Stoic, unless we should incline to affirm — and this, indeed, appears to be the veritable state of the case — that his pro-suicidal opinions were still more unlimited and more sweeping than those of any other ancient teacher and advocate of Stoicism whose writings have reached us. It is, therefore, mainly in reference to him that Justus Lipsius, the celebrated Belgian scholar, to whom a monument has been lately erected in his native land, published

¹⁾ Vide more especially ch. 10 of the 61st fragmental book of Dion Cassius. ²⁾ Ibid. lib. 62, c. 25.

anno 1604 a work,¹⁾ two dissertations of which treat of our theme at considerable length. The first of them bears the superscription: „Sapientem sumere aliquando mortem posse, decere, debere: ex Stoico quidem decreto“; the second: „Decretum hoc rejectum, et ostensum non licere, non debere, mixtis rationibus testibusque.“ The copious erudition displayed in these two Essays has been of manifold service to me throughout some portions of my Treatise; but, if I mistake not, the author's judgment has not by any means kept always equal pace with his learning, so that I have often seen cause to differ from him in toto, nor are his labors either so instructive or so interesting as they would have been, if he had arranged his materials more chronologically and more logically.

With Seneca suicide is a most fluent and palatable topic, an unmistakeably favorite text about which he, like many other preachers on other themes, indulges ever and again in words, even though he should have nothing fresh to add to what he has already said a dozen times before. He speaks of it in most of his treatises,²⁾ and in any given number of his epistolae ad Lucilium;³⁾ in other words: he speaks of it more frequently than any other Stoic writer, and, we might also say, with greater power and decision, with more eloquence, though it be often false eloquence, and more skill, though it be often mere sophistry. Nay, he even turns *controversial* on the question, a circumstance which is, as far as I am aware, without any exact parallel in the writings of classical antiquity. He, namely, mentions with disapprobation, even astonishment, and, perhaps, some degree of contempt that certain other philosophers interdict suicide.⁴⁾ „Invenies etiam professores sapientiam, qui vim afferendam vitae suae negent, et nefas judicent ipsum interemptorem sui fieri. Expectandum esse exitum quem natura decrevit.“ Whom he, however, alludes to specifically, it might be somewhat difficult to determine. We might incline to think that the most probable, because the nearest, reference would be to certain cotemporary Roman writers; but, since none such are known, not even Cicero, for reasons we shall disco-

¹⁾ *Manuductionis ad Stoicam philosophiam libri tres*: L. Annæo Senecæ aliisque scriptoribus illustrandis. Lib. III, dissertt. XXII et XXIII. ²⁾ E. g. de ira, lib. III, c. 15; de providentia, c. 2 and c. 6; de beneficiis, I, c. 11; de benevolentia, lib. IV, c. 31; de consolatione ad Marciam, c. 20. ³⁾ In addition to those mentioned on p. 88. e. g. epp. 12, 14, 17, 22, 26, 30, 51, 56, 59, 65, 69, 91, 92, 104. Vide also Cicero de Finibus, lib. III, c. 18, and lib. IV, c. 20. ⁴⁾ Ep. 70.

ver in the next §, and the prevalence of Epikurism and Stoicism would lead us to suppose that none existed, we must, I presume, think of Pythagoras or Sokrates, Plato or Aristoteles. But we will now, upon the basis of the numerous passages referred to at the foot of the preceding page, assign his own views and principles as scrupulously and minutely as can be desirable.

Not only *may* man take away his own life, but he, under certain circumstances, *ought* to do so. Seneca, however, does not strictly or accurately distinguish between „may“ and „ought“; and we must, therefore, let these two notions, though anything but synonymous, *coalesce*, as it were, when we put this question: of what kind, then, are the circumstances under which suicide is permissible or obligatory? Answer. 1. Greatest possible poverty. 2. Captivity, or slavery. 3. Deep grief. 4. The debility of old age, or incurable disease. 5. The certainty of a cruel, or an ignominious, death at the hands of the enemy, or at those of the executioner. 6. The impossibility of occupying, or maintaining, an external position suitable to one's principles, i. e. of exercising philosophy, evidencing energy, and enjoying such happiness as is both honorable and inward. 7. Satiety of life. — Which same specifications, however, might really seem to some rather superfluous, inasmuch as our purpose would apparently have been served just as well, if we had cut the matter short by simply stating that Seneca considered every possible cause, howsoever insignificant, a sufficient and justifiable motive for hastening one's own death by violent means, if one listed to do so; that, in other words, suicide was, according to his interpretation and application of the Stoic gospel, warrantable *under all circumstances*; and, in very sooth, he himself on one occasion ¹⁾ almost forces some such generic inference upon us. „Iter imperfectum erit, si in media parte, aut citra petitum locum steteris: vita non est imperfecta, si honesta est. Ubicumque desines, si bene desinis, tota est. Saepe autem et fortiter desinendum est, *et non ex maximis causis. Nam nec hae maximae sunt, quae nos tenent.*“ — Nevertheless, he on other occasions ²⁾ zealously disapproves of, and argumentatively de-

¹⁾ Epist 77; and, indeed, in the following one (ep. 78), he informs us that he had more than once the intention of destroying himself in consequence of a tedious illness or other causes, had not the thought of the grief he would have given his aged father and others presented itself as a check.
²⁾ Vide epp. 24, 30, 70.

nounces, rash, over-hasty, and, perhaps, even angry, suicide, more especially, if it be committed solely from fear of death, or only from satiety of life. But, as it seems to me, his rule „swallowed a camel“, and his exceptions look very much like „straining at a gnat“; at all events, to some keener vision than mine is, it must be left to discern the intended boundary-line in this shadowy realm of our philosopher's.

II. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (in the 2nd cent. p. C.).

This crowned and sceptred author who professed¹⁾ „mainly the principles of the Stoa“, and „had for his teachers in philosophy Junius Rusticus and Nicomedes Apollonius, out of the school of Zeno“, left behind him a philosophico-ethical work, composed amid the tumult of a camp and manifold external excitement, yet full of deep inward tranquillity and clearness; *Meditations* addressed to himself only (τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν), yet possessing interest and value for all mankind, like all soliloquies and confessions of the noble in mind and the pure in heart; a booklet unadorned by any factitious brilliancy of style and lacking in a peculiar degree arrangement of parts, coherence of argument, severity of school-logics, yet convincing and impressive enough to have contributed mainly to instigate the Swede Roßbeck to his pro-suicidal maxims and pro-suicidal enthusiasm: from which last incident the reader will infer for himself that Marcus Aurelius, though seated well-nigh omnipotently on the throne of a vast world, knew well that happiness does not necessarily dwell with empurpled power and glory, and deeply felt that the ills of life might sometimes, even in his own case, be such as to render self-inflicted death desirable. — After which brief proemium we proceed to state his pro-suicidal utterances and teachings, merely notifying, however, before doing so that, in the year 1697, Gataker published his celebrated edition of our work, and in it on more than one occasion²⁾ discusses the topic we are enquiring into with an unusual amount of knowledge at his bidding, though it has appeared to me individually that he has failed to present us with so clear and complete a survey of the views of his author as we might have desired and expected.

¹⁾ Dio Cassius, lib. 71, c. 1 and c. 35. ²⁾ Especially in his *Annotations* in lib. III, §. 1, but also ad lib. V, §. 29, and lib. IX, §. 3. I shall, however, make my quotations from Schultz's edit. of 1820.

1. One ought to live — as long as one can do so in accordance with one's convictions and inclinations; but, if it be no longer possible to live thus, we should quit life voluntarily, as we leave a smoking apartment; for a rational being is created unto society, i. e. to work good, and to feel happy, in the environments of earthly existence. The passage¹⁾ I shall now quote entire in the original is the one upon which we must lay the greatest stress, because it is, doubtless, the most developed one in the whole work before us. Ὡς ἐξαλθὼν ζῆν διανοῇ, οὕτως ἐνταῦθα ζῆν ἔξεστιν. Ἐάν δὲ μὴ ἐπιτρέπωσι, τότε καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἔστιθι. οὕτως μέντοι, ὡς μηδὲν κακὸν πάσχων· ἡσπνὸς, καὶ ἀπάρχομαι. τί αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα δοχαίς; μέχρι δὲ με τοιούτων οὐδὲν ἐξάγει, μένω ἐλευθέρως, καὶ οὐδεὶς με καλύσει ποιεῖν, ἃ θέλω. θέλω δὲ κατὰ φύσιν τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ ζώου. 2. Death is ever approaching nearer; often, however, ere we die, we suffer the loss of our full mental capacities and insights, and old age deprives us of the strength to judge aright, whether it be the proper season to quit life (εἰ ἤδη ἐξακτέον αὐτόν, — χρήζει), which matter requires a manly and well-exercised Reason; therefore, we *must hasten* (χρὴ οὖν ἐπείγασθαι), i. e. not defer self-destruction, until the last moment of declining years.²⁾ 3. In us dwells the Divinity, and it is our duty so to live that *He* hold presidency over our minds; *He* may at any time, sooner or later, give us a signal to retreat out of life, and it is our task to become so moulded and framed as to be ready to go hence whenever such sign shall be given;³⁾ ἀπειταχότος ἑαυτὸν, οἷος ἂν εἴη τις περιμένων τὸ ἀνακλητικὸν ἐκ τοῦ βίου εὐλυτος — which, being interpreted, signifieth, doubtless, about thus: whenever we can no longer obtain what we desire, our inward ear hears, or, rather, fancies and persuades itself that it does so, the said divine trumpet-sound, and then we must, or may, march off out of the camp, or strife, of life. 4. We ought, however, to enter upon this final march calmly, and with a forgiving heart, not in anger, not with complaint and murmuring. This is a favorite maxim of our author's,⁴⁾ and with it, indeed, he concludes his whole little book: ἀπὸ οὖν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν εὐμενῆς — ἔστιθι τοῦ βίου, μὲ ὀργίζομενος, ἀλλὰ ἀπλῶς, καὶ ἐλευθέρως, καὶ αἰδημόνως, ἐν γε τοῦτο μὸ-

¹⁾ Lib. V, c. 20. ²⁾ Lib. III, c. 1. ³⁾ Ibid. c. 5, and VIII, 47, with which cf. the simile and expression ἐξήθι in lib. III, 3. ⁴⁾ Lib. VIII, 47; X, 8; XII, 36.

γον πράξας ἐν τῇ βίῳ, τὸ οὕτως ἐξελθεῖν — ἄπιθι οὖν Ἰλεως καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἀπολύων Ἰλεως.

III. Epiktetos (in the 2nd cent. p. C.).

Saint Chrysostomos, as I have read, somewhere says: „if anybody be even a captive, or a *slave*, or a stranger in a country, and have virtue with him, he is among *all kings the greatest*.“ Which beautiful words the life-history, brief and simple though it be, of this our „Phrygian slave with a free soul“ recalled to my memory, that life of unabating energy in humblest station and uncomplaining endurance amid severest hardships, that well-known continuous exhortation of his „bear and forbear“, and that his less well-known accounting himself, if the distich at issue be his own composition, „one beloved of the Immortal Gods“ (φίλος Ἀθανάτοις). — Verily, methinks, the laurels of the victor-wreath he won had grown and matured beneath hottest rays and bleakest storms; nay, methinks, if ever Greek or Roman Sage, Diogenes of Sinope, perhaps, excepted,¹⁾ refuted his own pro-suicidal theorems by his own non-suicidal end, it was surely he.

Our *chief* source for the following representation of the opinions of Epiktetos will be his so called *Dissertationes*, as written down by his disciple Flavius Arrianus, an extremely unconnected, vague, monotonous, and inwardly dry, but, perhaps, for this very reason, all the more faithful, account of what the Master was in the habit of delivering in the form of, as we might say, lectures to his hearers. Of these same Discourses, however, only the first half, i. e. four books out of eight, have been rescued from the scythe of Time; along with the other four also sundry other works of the same Arrian's, e. g. twelve books of friendly discourses with Epiktetos, and a biography of Epiktetos, have shared a like fate. The so-called *Enchiridion*, or Manual, i. e. a book always to be kept at hand, of Epiktetos, a work in the same degree close and methodic in which the *Dissertationes* are negligent and diffuse, does not contain any one passage which speaks so directly either for or against suicide

¹⁾ Lucian, it is true, takes for granted in various passages, besides those we have already cited, that Diogenes died a voluntary death; but Gottling declares the narrative of his suicide „an absurdity which it is not necessary to refute“, and makes out that he lived cheerfully and died naturally as real slave at Corinth. Vide his ingenious and inspiring essay *Diogenes der Cyrtifer oder die Philosophie des griechischen Proletariats*, p. 270 of his *Abhandlungen*, to which we shall revert in §. 32: an essay that did not become known to me, until §. 27 had been already printed.

that a reference to it could shed any decisive light upon his opinions concerning our topic, though Simplicius¹⁾ who, in the 6th cent. p. C., wrote a Commentary (Exegesis) upon it, appears to have been of opinion that the said Enchiridion warranted him in commending suicide under certain adverse circumstances. When, namely, elucidating a passage in which there is not any special allusion to suicide, but merely a discussion of Providence and a caution against letting the rational part of ourselves take harm, he says what follows.²⁾ „For it would be still more preferable not to be, and to afford no providence than that anybody of whom it is believed that he is and affords providence should have maliciously cunning and inimical designs against those who stand under his provision. For that is as much as being in a bad (adverse) manner. But one will rather not be than be in a bad manner. The reason thereof is, because the Good is still more excellent than the Being, nay, the origin of all existent things. It is, therefore, the final purpose of all things, and all things are for its sake. For we love Being or Existence itself only in as far as we regard it as a Good. Consequently, *as soon as we should happen to be in a bad manner, we choose rather not to be*“ (διὸ, ὅταν κακῶς ὦμεν, ἀγαπῶμεν μᾶλλον μὴ εἶναι). Cf. the in the opposite direction analogous quotation we made in §. 23 from Hierokles' Commentary on the aurea carmina. Likewise, the not inconsiderable so-called *Fragments* of Epictetos, despite the frequently occurring dictum that „it is better not to live than to live badly“, and sundry similes which might *possibly* admit of a pro-suicidal interpretation, do not exhibit aught that would justly warrant us in pronouncing their author to have been a decided and an emphatic advocate of suicide.

We, therefore, see ourselves reduced to the Dissertationes as even our *only* source; but they are so clear and fruitful a one³⁾ that both Moore (vol. I. p. 194 ff.) and Schulz⁴⁾ appear to me certainly in error: the former, when he says that Epiktetos' pro-suicidal theory

¹⁾ „In Ethics he seems to have abandoned the mystical pantheistic purification-theory of the Neo-Platonists, and to have found full satisfaction in the ethical system of the later Stoics.“ Thus the writer of the art. on him in Smith's Classical Dictionary, vol. III, p. 838. ²⁾ Editio cum versione Wolfii, Leyden, 1640, c. 38 in fin. p. 251. ³⁾ Vide especially lib. I, c. 2, c. 9, c. 16, c. 24, c. 25, c. 29; lib. II, c. 1, c. 6, c. 15; lib. III, c. 13, c. 22, c. 24 towards the end, c. 26; lib. IV, c. 1, c. 10. ⁴⁾ Anmerkung zu lib. I, c. 29 in his Uebersetzung der Unterredungen des Epiktet mit seinen Schülern, p. 42. Vide also his preliminary Aufsatz über Epiktet's Philosophie, pp. 43, 44.

is „a lurking weed sometimes discoverable amid his fair blossoms of sense and virtue“, since it is not by any means merely „lurking“, but, on the contrary, most apparent, and is so little intended to assume the shape and character of a mere „weed“ that it rather attains to the magnitude and gaudiness of a tended and favorite flower; the latter, when he says that Epiktetos' prescriptions on our topic are merely „negative“; for we shall, I presume, find them quite as positive as they need be. As further literary notice, it may be as well to direct the reader's attention also to Upton's meritorious edition of the works of Epiktetos, published anno 1741, in one of the small quarto volumes of which (more especially in the annotations on lib. I, c. 9, vv. 16 and 20) a portion of the literary apparatus is devoted to the subject of our enquiry; but what Upton there brings forward, though literally reprinted in Schweighäuser's edition of Epicteteae philosophiae monumenta, 1799, T. II, pars I, p. 135, certainly affords but little light.

1. Suicide is permissible. 2. The permissibility has, however, its limitations; for a) there must be a rational cause for self-destruction: ¹⁾ μόνον μὴ ἀλογίστως, μόνον μὴ μαλακῶς, μὴ ἐκ τῆς τυχούσης προφάσεως —; and b) one must even await a divine sign or signal for the appropriateness, or necessity, of it: ²⁾ ἄνθρωποι, ἐκδέξασθε τὸν Θεόν. ὅταν ἐκεῖνος σημήνῃ καὶ ἀπολύσῃ ὑμᾶς ταύτης τῆς ὑπηρεσίας, τότε ἀπολύεσθε πρὸς αὐτόν. The solemn and devout manner in which these two limitations are enunciated by Epiktetos might almost incline us to believe that, ere man would be justified in voluntarily departing out of life, something very significant and momentous would have to constitute the tempting cause, since even Sokrates' case is introduced as a sort of conditioning analogy: ³⁾ ἐὰν δὲ σημήνῃ (ὁ Θεός) το ἀναλητικόν, ὡς τῷ Σωκράτει, πείθεσθαι δεῖ τῷ σημαίνοντι, ὡς στρατηγῷ. Yet, we are speedily and thoroughly disabused on this score, when we learn, if we look carefully and closely, that discontent with life, or dissatisfaction with one's position, greatest possible poverty, the impossibility (?) of leading any longer a life useful, consistent with nature, or decorous, banishment, or slavery, useless pain — afford, according to him likewise, justifiable or legitimate reasons for suicide, so that the will and inclination of the individual may be said to become pretty much the

¹⁾ Lib. I, c. 29. ²⁾ Lib. I, c. 9. ³⁾ Lib. I, c. 29, and cf. lib. II, c. 15.

sole arbiters in the matter, and Reason alone, not a sense of moral obligation or of moral responsibility, has to decide. It is true, he, like other Stoics, blames *causeless* suicide, but, it is equally true, he, also, like them, represents suicide under certain circumstances as a *duty*; however, expressly distinctive notification of what is causeless in opposition to what is dutieous in this matter we should search for in vain.

IV. Tacitus (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

There cannot be any question whatsoever about the propriety and necessity of making the three preceding writers bearers and exponents of the Stoic view concerning suicide, even if, as Moore (*ubi supra*) suggests, Epiktetos ought to be regarded, not as a genuine Stoic, but rather as an Eclectic, whilst Schulz (*ubi supra*) asserts, on the contrary, that the tenets of the Stoa are to be found more purely in his teachings than in those of e. g. Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. Wherefore, for instance, Tiedemann, when discussing the Stoic doctrine of suicide,¹⁾ confines himself, if we except a couple of references to Cicero, to the said three philosophers; and, therefore, our appending to them the two following writers, in whose works we do not meet with the stereotype Stoic phrases ἡ νότα ἡ θύρα, liberum ostium, or the favorite Stoic similes about the divine trumpet sounding a retreat, about quitting a smoking room, or, laying off an uncomfortable garment, or, rushing out of a rickety dwelling, or, giving up an untenable post, and suchlike more, which strongly remind us that „simile non est *idem*“, — may seem to require some little comment by way of self-justification.

Was Tacitus really a Stoic?

„Remarks on the philosophy of the historian Tacitus.“ This is the title of an essay which Stäudlin has appended to one of his bulky books.²⁾ From it I learn that e. g. Diderot and Crollius asserted that Tacitus was a Stoic, whereas Lipsius and d'Alembert affirmed that he was an Epikurist. Stäudlin himself concludes that he was not the adherent of any philosophic sect whatsoever. For my own part, I should feel disposed to believe a priori that his stern and severe moral feelings with their pain-weighted tone of

¹⁾ System der stoischen Philosophie, 1776, Th. III, pp. 309—321. ²⁾ Geschichte und Geist des Skepticismus, B. II, pp. 299—309.

melancholy would naturally have led him especially to Stoicism in matters ethical and practical, though his original and profound mind with its own resources, wants and bents would have induced him to reject many of the dogmatical fixations and extravagancies of Zeno's disciples, and rather to decide or to doubt in such mode and direction as his own experience, observation, reflection had taught and led him. Nor is the specific impression I have individually gained from his writings different from what I should have in general supposed congenial with his natural character, viz. that in them the best elements of ancient, not degenerate, Stoicism, are manifest, as they are, likewise, doubtless, in the works of the loftiest of his more or less cotemporary countrymen, e. g. the satires of Persius and Juvenal. It was, however, not his manner to indulge in lengthy and systematic discussions on any ethical subject. Depth of thought, intensity of feeling, earnestness of purpose helped him to brevity of diction, obscure only to the schoolboy who must construe, ere he has learnt to think, or to the professed scholar whose task it is to give a minute account of every word, but not to those matured readers who seek in them the opinions he entertained, the sentiments he cherished on e. g. such a question as the one before us; for, as little as e. g. a Hume, a Gibbon, a Raynal could help making their respective historical works genuine vehicles of their moral philosophy, so little could Tacitus fail, whilst recording the concrete story of many suicides (vide §. 22, where, by the by, the printer has reversed the order of the quotations; that on p. 4 ought to be V, 6, and that on p. 5 XVI, 16), to afford to us a glance at his own view of suicide in the abstract.

It is true, almost every other classical historian, anecdotist, and even geographer, both Roman and Greek, when relating isolated instances of suicide, does so too, if not directly by accompanying reflections, yet indirectly by the tone and coloring of his narrative. But, partly, their own individuality steps into the background, as compared with Tacitus, partly, their measure of philosophy remained in a far greater degree than his confined to outward life, did not rise and reach into the problems of the soul and the school, as his did, and, partly, they are in and by themselves infinitely less worthy of special notice: wherefore, we should gain little or nothing for the historico-organic development of our subject by producing and pondering their incidental dicta.

That, now, in Tacitus all that native pride, unquenchable love of liberty, and dauntless heroism which, in part at least, had commended suicide to the Romans in general, commended it to him likewise in particular; that he considered it simply as „*mors opportuna*“, to use a frequent and favorite expression of his, equally pardonable and glorious, whether committed for the purpose of evading a public condemnation and execution, or captivity, or the inconveniences of old age, or those of sickness, we will proceed to show, sufficiently and conclusively, by adducing the following passages which will be found successively in the order of the foot-note.¹⁾ Mamercus Scaurus destroyed himself, that he might not be obliged to await the result of a public trial, and our historian tells us that he did so „ut *dignum* veteribus Aemiliis.“ Of the suicide of Lucius Arruntius he says: „documento sequentia erunt *benè* Arruntium morte usum.“ Of G. Aminius Rebius he thus informs us. „Ex primoribus peritia legum et pecuniae magnitudine, cruciatus aegrae senectae misso per venas sanguine effugit, haud creditus sufficere ad *constantiam* sumendae mortis, ob libidines muliebriter infamis.“ When Messalina had fallen into disgrace with the Emperor Claudius, her mother said to her „ne percussorem opperiretur; transisse vitam, neque aliud quam morti decus quaerendum“; but, because she, nevertheless, could not make up her mind to self-destruction, Tacitus adds: „sed animo per libidines corrupto nihil *honestum* inerat.“ In connexion with his narrative of the circumstance that Maroboduus, the once mighty king of the Marcomans, when vanquished, had taken refuge with Germanicus, and was kept a long time in a species of captivity at Ravenna, Tacitus remarks: „consenuitque multum imminuta claritate ob *nimiam* vivendi cupidinem“, thus, palpably, intimating that he *ought* to have left on the minds of his countrymen and cotemporaries an enduring image of his greatness and glory by either terminating his career through a voluntary death prior to his captivity, or by releasing himself out of his captivity through a self-inflicted death. — Of minor moment are sundry other narratives, scattered over our historian's pages,²⁾ though they be similar in tenor and tendency, e. g. that he reckons the fact that a soldier who, having ignorantly slain his own brother in battle, destroyed

¹⁾ Ann. VI, c. 29, and c. 48; XIII, 30; XI, 37; II, 63. ²⁾ Vide c. g. Ann. VI, 26, 29; XI, 3; XV, 57; XVI, 11, 19; Hist. II, 54; III, 51.

himself from remorse, as soon as he had become aware of his mistake, with much laudation among the „*exempla recti*.“ — Only in one single instance does Tacitus appear to speak somewhat *blamingly* of the phenomenon under mention. ¹⁾ „Statius Proximus veniam, quam ab Imperatore acceperat, *vanitate* exitus, corrumpit.“

V. The younger Pliny (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

Still more difficult, methinks, than even in regard to Tacitus would it be to aver aught positive or positively about this writer's philosophical creed. That it was not *essentially* different from that of his wiser and nobler friend, their intimacy, as proved by extant documents, and Pliny's reverence for and, perhaps, dependence upon (if his letters speak his heart's sincere feelings), Tacitus, might incline us to assume. But he was, despite all the almost proverbial kindness, gentleness, considerateness of his nature, evidently a somewhat, if not exactly weak, yet plastic, character, not without that portion of sentimental vanity and worldly obsequiousness which generally attach to similar individualities in similar environments. There is nothing of the Dantesque darkness and gloom and sternness left by evil days upon his mind; and, therefore, there is nothing in his writings that could render him a favorite author to souls great either through intense thought or through intense feeling. At all events, he had sought intercourse with, and, perhaps, had solicited the instructions of, professed *Stoics*, e. g. Euphrates from Tyre, whose virtues and eloquence he praises, ²⁾ and concerning whom Dio Cassius ³⁾ tells us what follows: ἀπέθανεν ἐθελοντῆς, ἐπιτρέψαντος αὐτῷ καὶ τοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ, κώνειον διὰ τὸ γῆρας καὶ διὰ τὴν νόσον πίνειν, i. e. he died a voluntary death, also Hadrian having permitted him, on account of his advanced age and his sickness, to drink the hemlock-cup (to which strange passage we shall revert at some length in §. 35 for *legal* purposes, wherefore I have here given it at once in the original). Therefore, taking all in all, we might expect Pliny to advocate suicide. Indeed, he does so to such a marked extent that Formey assures us that he had been induced to pen his entire book on our philosopher ⁴⁾ by one of the epistles in which suicide is inculcated. However, he does so, as we might also infer from what I have above stated, in an almost sentimentally considerate and re-

¹⁾ Ann. XV, 71. Vide Walther's graphic note on this passage. ²⁾ Lib. I, ep. 10. ³⁾ Lib. 63, c. 8 in vita Hadriani. ⁴⁾ Le philosophe Pléon, ou Pensées de Pléon, avec un commentaire littéraire et moral, 1759.

fined manner; in substance, perhaps, about thus: no law of *mortality* or *religion* interdicts self-slaughter; but prudence, or, constancy, or, the natural affection for relatives and friends may sometimes interfere to render it, apparently at least, an inadvisable or an unkind act, except, however, at the eleventh hour, as it were, of suffering, of danger, or, of satiety of life.

Having narrated¹⁾ that Titus Aristo would destroy himself only in case his physicians should declare his illness incurable, inasmuch as he would be well able to endure any pain that might be connected with it, he then continues in his own name thus: „id ego arduum in primis, et praecipua laude dignum puto. Nam impetu quodam et instinctu procurrere ad mortem, commune cum multis: deliberare vero et causas ejus expendere, utque suaserit ratio, vitae ac mortis consilium vel suscipere vel ponere, *ingentis est animi.*“ — Corellius Rufus had, when tortured by inherited rheumatic gout, at the advanced age of 76 starved himself to death, and Pliny, whilst recording this occurrence,²⁾ first of all admits that the survivors of one who thus voluntarily dies, bear their loss with less resignation, since they cannot but be conscious that they might have enjoyed his society still longer, if he had only been willing to allow them, proceeds as follows. „Corellium quidem summa ratio, *quae sapientibus pro necessitate est*, ad hoc consilium compulit, quamquam plurimas vivendi causas habentem, optimam conscientiam, optimam famam, maximam auctoritatem; praeterea filiam, uxorem, nepotem, sorores, interque tot pignora veros amicos. Sed tam longa, tam iniqua valetudine conflictabatur, ut haec tanta vivendi pretia mortis rationibus vincerentur.“ Though, by adducing all the ties which Corellius sundered, Pliny seems to insinuate that, since he certainly had motives enough for living, he, therefore, ought not to have departed voluntarily, yet he manifestly must not be thus understood; for, besides what has been already quoted, he says expressly that Corellius' expression to his physicians (*λέγωμαι*, viz. to starve myself to death) had filled him equally with *admiration* as with grief and regret. — On another occasion,³⁾ he exclaims with astonishment and apparent censure of an aged and a sickly man: „vivebat tamen et *vivere volebat.*“ — After having spoken of the reported and credited suicide of a certain notorious person, he gives utterance to his own

¹⁾ Epp. lib. I, ep. 22. ²⁾ Ibid. ep. 12. ³⁾ Lib. VIII, ep. 18.

incredulity touching the said fact in the following words:¹⁾ „at eum credibile videbatur voluisse exire de vita, cum defendi non posset; ita mirum, pudorem damnationis morte fugisse, quem non puduisset damnanda committere.“

Finally, one may turn to his representations of, and verdicts on, the suicidal deaths of Arria, Silius Italicus, Decebalus, and a certain nameless Roman woman.²⁾ — The above quoted work of Formey's is not now within my reach; but one of the extracts I made from it, when I perused it, is still in my keeping, and I will transcribe it as a sample of the ultra-severe christian spirit in which the said book was penned. Pliny had called Arria's „non dolet“ a „vox immortalis, ac pene divina.“ Whereon Formey says. „Il régné sans doute une grande magnanimité dans tout ce caractère d'Arria, quoiqu'il ne soit pas exempt d'une nuance de *féroacité*, sur-tout dans cet essai de se tuer, qui marque plus de roideur que de force dans l'ame. — Heureux le possesseur d'une Arria Chrétienne! Le Christianisme seul peut en effet conduire un si beau caractère à sa vraie perfection.“

§. 50. CICERO (in the 1st cent. a. C.).

The great Roman orator called or deemed himself³⁾ an adherent of the New Academy, a philosophical school the limits of which are so vague and variable that it might prove difficult to fix them chronologically with exactitude;⁴⁾ a philosophical school, moreover, to the very principles of which, in Cicero's time at least, a species of Eklekticism and Skepticism would appear to have belonged (cf. the passages in *de Divin.* just referred to). And, inasmuch now as Cicero himself was not by any means a philosopher *ex professo*, but only, so to speak, an amateur-philosopher, and even as such (*vide* his own confession quoted in §. 22) a mere plastic fashioner, a transplanter of Greek speculation into Roman eloquence, not an original thinker, we cannot in any wise expect that he should have rendered the New Academy's eklekticism less eklektic, or its skepticism less skeptical.

¹⁾ Lib. III, ep. 9. ²⁾ Lib. III, ep. 16, and ep. 7; VIII, ep. 4; VI, ep. 24.

³⁾ *De Divinat.* lib. II, c. ult. and cf. also c. 3. ⁴⁾ *Vide* Krug in his already quoted *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften* s. vv. Arcesilas, Carneades, Akademie.

We are, I believe, entirely ignorant of what the New Academy thought proper to promulgate on the subject of our enquiry; but, if Epiktetos' indignant sarcasm¹⁾ in regard to the want of ethical and religious elements in the tenets of the New Academy be even partially true, we must incline to assume that such tenets cannot but have been in a far greater degree favorable than unfavorable to suicide, so that Cicero, as far as he was a New Academician, must have *consistently* become likewise a defender of self-slaughter. Nor would his evident and unfeigned esteem for much of what characterized the Stoa have led him in a different direction. On the other hand, however, if we remember that he had not only received instructions from, and enjoyed personal intercourse with, many of the most distinguished Greek philosophers of almost *every* school in his age, but that he also, as his own writings abundantly testify, possessed an extremely extensive and intimate acquaintance with the works of Plato and Aristoteles as well as with those of Epikuros and Chrysippos, we cannot in any wise marvel, bearing in mind what we have just stated about his want of inborn, vigorous, independent speculative talent, at finding him likewise sometimes treading more or less firmly in the path of philosophic antagonism to a self-wrought death.

Before, however, entering upon a discussion of the undecidedness of Cicero's *views* touching our topic, we will expend a few words by way of illustrating the variableness of his *conduct* in relation to it. In general, indeed, his life and character are quite as interesting and instructive as are the productions of either his senatorial eloquence or his studious retirement; for, as his life is, as it were, a nucleus around which the chief events in the history of one of the most significant periods of the civilized then-world group themselves: so his character was, in consequence of its weak and vain ingredients, in a peculiar degree moulded and determined by external influences which more courageous or more unscrupulous natures triumphed over or profited by. And, as it fortunately happens, we possess, away from all other sources, in the copious collections of Cicero's own epistles most welcome and satisfactory materials out of which we can shape unto ourselves a most clear and complete image of Cicero *the man*.

¹⁾ Vide Arrian's *Dissertt.* lib. II, c. 20.

As far, then, as our theme is concerned, we find that he *uncovered* equally, as in theory, so in practice. As to the former what he says of himself in general „quaeram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et mihi ipse diffidens“ applies: so in the latter he acted up to his own dictum „quod dubitas, ne feceris.“ I should have to *re-read* Middleton's life of Cicero (having, unfortunately, mislaid, or lost, the notes I made from it), no easy task, for it is a book as dry as it is solid — if I would arrange e. g. *chronologically* all the notices that might here prove serviceable. I will, therefore, content myself with referring to such passages in his own letters and in the classical historians as seemed to me, when I perused them, most telling in this point of view. All of them, if I recollect rightly, refer to the periods of his exile, after he had become an obnoxious statesman.¹⁾ At all events, they most unequivocally prove that — I here use his own words — he on one occasion „saw no reason for inflicting death upon himself, though he had many reasons to wish for death, it being an old saying: if you are no longer what you were, then also wish no longer for life“; that — he appears to consider it something ignominious, on his own part, to bear life after the destruction of Roman liberty, and not to have acted like Cato; that — it required, or, at least, seemed to require, all the counsel and encouragement of his friend and correspondent Atticus (the Epikurist who, as we know, subsequently himself died voluntarily) to dissuade him from self-destruction. — Instructive too, as well as amusing, is the lengthy philosophical consolation which Dio Cassius²⁾ let the Epikurist Philiseus impart to the down-cast orator and statesman during his first exile in Macedonia. Noteworthy, likewise, in reference to our theme is the following communication of Dio Cassius.³⁾ When, after Caesar's death, Cicero had pronounced an elaborate and a very vehement oration against Mark Antony, a certain Quintus Fuscus Celenus delivered a considerably lengthy and madly violent speech against Cicero, by way of vindicating Antony, and in his speech reproaches Cicero with having in that very oration boasted of his contempt for death. Such boast (e. g. *ὅτι οὐδ' ἄλλο τὸ ψηφισαῖος, τεθνᾶναι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῆναι ἐλεύσθαι*) Celenus apparently con-

¹⁾ Epistolae ad Atticum, lib. III, epp. 3, 4, 7, 9, 10; lib. IV, ep. 6; lib. XIII, ep. 28, as compared with lib. XII, ep. 4; Epp. ad Fam., VII, 3 (ad Marium); Epp. ad Quintum fratrem, lib. I, ep. 3. ²⁾ Lib. 37, c. 18—29. ³⁾ Lib. 46, c. 26 and c. 28, with which cf. lib. 45, c. 18 and more especially c. 46.

ceived as referring more or less to suicide also, and, therefore, takes the liberty of advising, or reproving, him as follows. „Boast no longer of despising death (μήδ' ἄν εἰπῇς, ὅτι τοῦ θανάτου καταρροεῖς), and do not expect to be praised by us for doing so. For, people who carry suchlike speeches on their lips everybody suspects and hates, because one must fear every misdeed from their temerity. Whereas one lauds and extols him of whom one sees that he esteems his own life, because he will not easily embolden himself to commit a deed which is deserving of death.“ However, this antagonist's cutting persiflage was, we may reasonably take for granted, scarcely necessary to prevent Cicero from proving the sincerity of his boast by a suicidal deed. Those who are fond of historical parallels might recollect in this context John O'Connell's menace or promise „to die on the floor of the House of Commons.“ But, the context of Celenus' persiflage with Cicero's own previous expressions about his non-fear of death induces, nay, compels, me to assume that Cicero and Celenus were both thinking rather of assassination or judicial condemnation than of suicide, though Wächter (pp. 248, 249 of the already quoted juridical dissertation) refers our passage without further ado to suicide. Moreover, if Celenus meant to speak of suicide, the public feeling in Rome at that time was, as we know, diametrically opposed to the sentiment he expresses, and we should have to regard it as something palpably put forth at hap-hazard, and inspired by personal pique, like e. g. Lucian's affair with Peregrinos (§. 28), not as the utterance of a deliberate opinion. Wherefore, I made no use of it in §. 6, where it might otherwise justly have found a place; and, therefore, I, of course, refuse to subscribe to Beier's dictum on it.¹⁾ „Olim quidem Romanis autochiriam visam esse detestabilem, diserte testatur Dion Cassius.“ — But to hasten to the last tragic scene of poor Cicero's brilliant, but chequered, career. We learn from both Plutarch²⁾ and the elder Seneca³⁾ that he would have destroyed himself a short while before he was butchered by Antony's soldiers, had not a certain irresoluteness and timidity, defects in his character of which Cicero himself seems to have been perfectly conscious,⁴⁾ prevented him from doing so. He in-

¹⁾ Excursus XV. ad c. 31 et c. 43 in his edition of Cicero's de Officiis, 1820, vol. I, p. 355. ²⁾ In his life of Cicero, towards the end. ³⁾ Suasor. I, in a fragment of Livy; and ibid. c. 6, on the authority of Cremutius Cordus. „Omnia displicuisse praeter mortem.“ ⁴⁾ Vide epp. ad Atticum, lib. II, ep. 18.

tended even, as we are told, to repair to Rome, and, stealing into the house of Octavius, who had betrayed him, to invoke the divinities of vengeance down upon the traitor's head by thrusting a dagger into his breast at the domestic altar! — His great Greek model, Demosthenes, we know, really had withdrawn himself at Kallauria by poison from his pursuers.

Thus much concerning his *practice*. And, also, in regard to his *theory* concerning suicide, momentary impulses, and accidental circumstances rather than clear insights and firm principles would appear to have been his mentor and guide, as, perchance, likewise touching other more or less important questions. Sometimes he speaks most positively and fervently against the permissibility of self-destruction, in the fashion and spirit of a Pythagorist or Sokratist; and, at other times, he expresses himself decidedly in favor and defence of its lawfulness, like a Stoic, though scarcely like an Epikurist.

I. Anti-suicidal utterances.

It is not by any means the smallest merit of Macrobius' already (§. 25) quoted „Commentary on the Dream of Scipio“ that this very Commentary has preserved unto us the Dream itself in Cicero's own words; for all the efforts of modern scholars, though attended with so much unexpected good fortune in reference to Cicero's long-lost *de Republica*, have not enabled them to discover elsewhere *this* portion of the said work to which it originally belonged.¹⁾

1. The younger Scipio, son to Paulus Aemilius, is therein represented as discoursing, in a Dream or Vision, with his deceased grandfather and father. The former having described to him the glories of Elysium, and the latter having joyfully embraced him, Scipio, longing to join them, asks his father, why he should tarry on earth, why he should not make haste to get to them, thus suddenly exchanging a place of comparative strife and misery for an abode of bliss and beauty? To which question Paulus Aemilius replies in the following words. „Non est ita. Nisi enim Deus is, cujus hoc templum est omne, quod conspicias, istis de corporis custodiis liberaverit, huc tibi aditus patere non potest. Homines enim sunt hac lege generati, qui tuerentur illum globum, quem in hoc templo medium vides, quae terra dicitur: hisque animus datus est ex illis sempiternis ignibus, quae sidera et stellas vocatis; quae globosae et

¹⁾ Lib. VI, c. 15.

rotundae, divinis animatae mentibus, circos suos orbesque confidunt celeritate mirabili. Quare et tibi, Publi, et piis omnibus retinendus est animus in custodia corporis: nec injussu ejus, a quo ille est vobis datus, ex hominum vita migrandum est, ne munus humanum assignatum a Deo defugisse videamini.“ After having, hereupon, exhorted his son to justice, love of his fellow-men and of his native country, he concludes thus: „ea vita via est in caelum, et in hunc coetum eorum, qui jam vixerunt, et corpore laxati illum incolunt locum, quem vides.“ 2. In immediate connexion with this passage I will quote another to the concluding sentence of which our attention has been drawn already in §. 23. „Sed vivendi est finis optimus, quum integramente ceterisque sensibus opus ipsa suum eadem, quae coagmentavit, natura dissolvit. Ut navem, ut aedificium idem destruit facillime, qui construxit; sic hominem eadem optime, quae conglutinavit, natura dissolvit. Jam omnis conglutinatio recens aegre, inveterata facile divellitur. Ita fit, ut illud breve vitae reliquum nec avidè appetendum senibus, nec sine causa deserendum sit: vetatque Pythagoras, injussu imperatoris, id est dei, de praesidio et statione vitae decedere.“ 3. Also the following passage¹⁾ is *partly*, but *only* partly, of a kindred nature. „Sed haec et vetera, et a Graecis. Cato autem sic abiit e vita, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet. Vetat enim dominans ille in nobis deus, injussu hinc nos suo demigrare: quum vero causam justam deus ipse dederit, ut tunc Socrati, nunc Catoni, saepe multis: nae ille, medius fidius, vir sapiens, laetus ex his tenebris in lucem illam excesserit. Nec tamen illa vincla carceris ruperit: leges enim vetant; sed, tamquam a magistratu, aut ab aliqua potestate legitima, sic a deo evocatus atque emissus, exierit. *Tota enim philosophorum vita, ut ait idem (i. e. Socrates), commentatio mortis est.*“

I have placed these three passages together, because they are one and all manifestly more or less Pythagoric or Philolaic, Socratic or Platonic in their notion and imagery; and, if I now, among other things, also revert at some length to what we already spoke of very circumstantially in §. 23, it is not by any means for the purpose of merely resuming an enquiry which we had apparently brought to a conclusion, but rather, partly, because I referred the reader then and there to *this* §, and, partly, because subsequently to the com-

¹⁾ Tusc. Disput. lib. I, c. 30.

position of that § sundry books have fallen into my hands from which I myself have gathered additional information.

In passage 3 (*nec tamen illa vincla carceris ruperit*), we encounter *φρουρά* employed by Cicero *evidently* in the acceptance of bonds or prison, as we hinted already in §. 23: a conception with which Cicero, whether he really believed in it or not, was at all events perfectly familiar. Witness, for instance, the following fragment,¹⁾ preserved by Augustinus (*contra Julian. Pelagium*, lib. IV, c. 15), of his lost work *de Philosophia sive Hortensius*: „those ancients (*veteres illi*, i. e. Pythagoreans, or Orpheans?) had taught, be it as prophets, or be it in the sacred mysteries (*sive vates, sive in sacris initiisque*) as interpreters of the divine mind that we, in consequence of certain misdeeds committed in a previous life, had been born for the purpose of atoning for them.“ Also, I may here incidentally remark, Macrobius, in his analysis (*ubi supra*) of the *Phaedonic* passage renders the *φρουρά* by „carcer“, but plays the simile at once over into reference to an ordinary and a literal imprisonment: „ait (Plato) enim eos, qui potestatis imperio trudentur in carcerem, non oportere inde diffugere, priusquam potestas ipsa quae clausit abire permiserit; non enim vitari poenam furtiva discessione, sed crescere“; — and Müller²⁾ finds in the word at issue an unmistakeable by-reference to Sokrates' own repeatedly declined flight out of his prison. Plessing,³⁾ on the contrary, argues this meaning of *φρουρά* in the *Phaedonic* passage very acutely and eruditely from the therein pre-supposed and promulgated doctrines of the pre-existence of souls and the fall of man, but, surely, gives himself much *unnecessary* trouble previously to demonstrate that *φρουρά*, like *φύλαξις*, really *may* mean „prison“ as well as „post“, one of his proofs being e. g. St. Paul's use (*Gal. III, 23*) of the derivative verb *φρουρεῖν*: *ἐπὶ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα* κ. τ. λ. On one point only I cannot agree with him, viz. his translating the adjective *μέγας* by the neuter *civis* *Großes* in a pre-eminently *laudatory* sense, and considering the *καί* (which he renders by *aber*) *eu patet* *esse* as a

¹⁾ Given in Nobbe's collective edition of Cicero's works p. 1172 among the *fragmenta librorum philosophicorum*. ²⁾ In the *Annmerkungen* to his excellent translation of Plato, B. IV, 1853, p. 547. He, however, refers confidently the whole simile to a *Mysterienfrage*, and not, as we have done, to aught esoterically Pythagorean, and, therefore, attacks Stallbaum who takes also the latter view. ³⁾ *Remnuntium oder Versuche zur Enthüllung der Geheimnisse des Christenthums*, 1787, B. II, pp. 171—183 more especially.

naturally objective, but not a really subjective, objection to the simile. The image, likewise, which occurs in passage 1 (*ists te corporis custodiis, animus in custodia corporis*), when referred back to what has been said a few lines previously (*immo vero, inquit, si vivunt, qui ex corporum vinculis, tamquam e carcere evolaverunt*), tells the same way. How, then, we might ask — did Cicero come in the one single instance, viz. in passage 2, to contradict, as it were, this explanation by translating it (quite falsely) into what we termed the military,¹⁾ the non-mystical, „*praesidium et statio*“? Must, after all, this same Ciceronian „*vetatque Pythagoras*“ &c. be regarded as an intended version of the *ὁ ἐν ἀπορητοῖς λεγόμενος λόγος* in question? I myself, most certainly, had no misgivings on this matter, when I penned §. 23; and we might even find some further corroboration of the view I have there sought to establish by recalling to memory that in the fragments of his oratio pro M. Aemilio Scauro — to which we shall revert in the course of this § more minutely — Cicero, after having detailed that portion of the *Phaedo* which bears upon suicide, expressly asks: „*Num igitur ista tra Sarda Pythagoram aut Platonem norat aut legerat?*“ Nevertheless, Göttling, in an equally able and interesting essay of his,²⁾ informs us expressly that Olympiodoros in his commentary on *Phaedo* communicates as one of the symbols of Pythagoras: *ἔνεο προατάματος τοῦ ἀποκράτορος ἐκ τῆς φρουρᾶς μὴ ἀποχωρεῖν*, i. e. without command of the (thy) general (thou shalt) not quit the (military) post; and Göttling takes for granted that the Ciceronian passage at issue is a faithful version of this manifest symbolical prohibition of suicide. We may revert to this statement again in this §, or in §. 32, when we come to speak specially of Olympiodoros himself, whose commentary I have not now before me, but, perhaps, shall be able to procure. At present, therefore, I will merely venture, with all modesty, to ask these few simple questions: does this symbolum really belong to Pythagoras? Is it proveably older than Cicero? Might not, possibly, Olympiodoros himself merely have turned Cicero's passage again into Greek?

Be this, however, as it may, the above three Ciceronian passages at all events contain nothing original either in idea or diction;

¹⁾ Vide also the „*tueor*“ just before. ²⁾ Die Symbole des Pythagoras, p. 301 of B. I of his *gesammelte Abhandlungen aus dem class. Alterthum*, 1851.

for, in addition to what I have just stated, likewise what is therein advanced concerning the natural and pleasureable dissolvment of the connexion between body and soul by old age may be easily traced to Plato,¹⁾ and is, moreover — this I may now already observe in reference to the „facillime“ with its correspondent „ita“ in passage 2 —, anything but a strictly *ethical* argument; and this last remark leads us on to state that the only original element which presents itself to our notice in the above given extracts is decidedly *equivocal*, as far as the prohibition of suicide is concerned, and into the bargain somewhat unintelligible: I allude to passage 3, which itself closes with words borrowed from the *Phaedo*. In it, namely, Cicero strangely considers and pronounces the death of Cato as essentially kindred to, nay, identical with, that of Sokrates. But, this is a palpable notional confusion (vide §§. 10, 24); is, also, simply neither more nor less than a Stoic view (cf. the quotation from Arrian in §. 29). Cicero, furthermore, awards an equal measure of approval and praise to the death of Sokrates and to that of Cato („Cato — gauderet“), on which sentiment one might compare his own peculiar comment in one of his epistles, where he says — this is, most probably, the meaning²⁾ — that to flee voluntarily out of life is the best, the *most ready*, means of escaping from its ills (Quod prima disputatio Tusculana te confirmat, sane gaudeo: *neque enim ullum est perfugium aut melius aut paratius*). But, as regards this same passage „Cato — gauderet“, some attempts have been made at mending by dint of critical conjecture a certain portion of the words under debate, albeit the questionable words are, haply, not sick at all, and, therefore, need no cure; at least, the MSS. (vide Orelli, vol. IV, pars I, p. 250) apparently offer no various reading which alters in the slightest degree the sense of the text as above given; for instance, Bentley's proposed emendation of „carceris“ into „corporis“ is, doubtless, very needless, and Bouhier's self-congratulatory conjecture³⁾ of „nec tanquam ille“ in lieu of „nec tamen illa“ leaves still what it would fain remove, and what its originator himself fancied it to have successfully re-

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Timaeus, c. 62 in fin., and cf. Davis' references thereto, given in his transl. of this Platonic Dialogue. ²⁾ Epp. ad Atticum, lib. XV, ep. 2. The other possible interpretation would be: there is no better means against the fear of death than the argumentative consolation there offered. ³⁾ Remarques sur les Tusculanes de Ciceron, 1737, T. III, pp. 348, 349.

moved, viz. Cicero's self-contradiction; for, Cato's suicide, too, was, and all suicide cannot but be, a *violent breaking* of the bonds of the body or prison. — Nevertheless, e. g. both Gataker and Upton (ubi supra) produce the very passage we are now discussing — as one of Cicero's argumentations against the lawfulness of self-destruction.

Very striking, furthermore, in this identical passage 3 is the clause „for the laws forbid it.“ The usual interpretation among ourselves is, I believe, to the effect that Cicero is referring to certain anti-suicidal Roman pontifical or civil laws existent and acted upon in his time. At least, Pearce¹⁾ informs his hearers in the same sermon in which he assures them that „the Romans' best writer and philosopher, Cicero, pronounces suicide absolutely unlawful“, also that the Roman laws condemned it as much as the *English* ones; and Moore (vol. I, p. 245), fancying that the Pontifical books are meant, refers us to a passage in Livy (lib. I, c. 20), which teaches us what we cannot in the least doubt, viz. that the Pontifical Books occupied themselves likewise with matters of burial. But, the investigations we shall have to make in §. 35 will satisfactorily convince us that, as far as our knowledge goes, no such laws are to be found either in theory or in practice at Rome in the age of Cicero, or, indeed, in any previous age of Roman history; nay, we shall there learn, collaterally and inferentially at least, even from Cicero himself something extremely like the very opposite. Nor would it be reasonable to suppose that Cicero was alluding to any ideal laws in any Latin philosophical Utopia; for no work of this kind would seem to have found a place in Roman literature prior to his own *de Republica*, if we should incline to denominate the latter book one; and, indeed, the extremely practical character of the Roman people and the equally practical cast of Roman legislation put a veto on any suchlike supposition. All the commentators, as far as I have had an opportunity of consulting them, have passed over this same „*leges enim vetant*“ with what may be convenient, but is nevertheless ill-timed, silence; for the point is in itself important, and the question in itself interesting. My own humble impression in this: the term „*lex*“ is here employed in the sense of an *ethical*, i. e. a philosophico-religious, *precept*, and refers simply to Sokratic Platonism: in which

¹⁾ A sermon on self-murder, 1736, pp. 7, 8. It was published anonymously; but on the title-page of the copy I read in the British Museum library the name of Zach. Pearce is written.

case we should imagine the said entire clause a sort of translation of the phrase τὸ μὴ θανάτων εἶναι αὐτὸν βιάζεσθαι which occurs so frequently in the Phædon. As a somewhat elucidatory parallel, I might instance Libanius' reference¹⁾ to Plato's interdiction of suicide as to a *ἰσχυρὸς νόμος*: ἐνενόησα τὸν τοῦ Πλάτωνος νόμον, καὶ ὡς αὐτὸν οὐ λυτέον τὴν τῷ αὐτῷ δὴ λύσιν.

Finally, about the exact force of the „sine causa“ in passage 2 we will say a few words in a later portion of this §. — Before, however, passing over to such passages in Cicero's writings as we take to be decidedly pro-suicidal, it might seem but just that I should refer the reader to, perhaps, a comparatively little known work of his, viz. the oratio pro M. Aemilio Scauro, numerous, but, as far as our topic comes into play, incoherent and inconclusive, fragments of which have been preserved. A Sardinian woman, the wife of a certain Aris, was alledged by a certain Triarius to have hanged herself, because Scaurus, whilst Praetor in Sardinia, had done, or attempted, violence to her virtue. Cicero, having previously spoken of the Phædo, says in reference to the presumptive reason for her self-inflicted death:²⁾ „*aliam quidem causam mortis voluntariae nullam prefecto iustam reperiatis.*“ He is attempting to argue down the fact adduced by Triarius, and the entire tone is so ironical and the argument so abrupt that, as far as I am able to discern, nothing significant and decisive can be attached to these words.

II. Pro-suicidal utterances.

In his well-known ethical system, whilst speaking of what is decorous, Cicero says:³⁾ „*Atque hæc differentia naturarum tantam habet vim, ut nonnunquam mortem sibi ipse consciscere alius debeat, alius in eadem causa non debeat.* Num enim alia in causa M. Cato fuit, alia ceteri, qui se in Africa Caesari tradiderunt? Atque cetera forsitan vitio datum esset, si se interemissent, propterea quod lenior eorum vita et mores fuerant faciliores: Catoni quam in-credibilem tribuisset natura gravitatem, eamque ipse perpetua constantia roboravisset semperque in proposito susceptoque consilio permansisset, moriendum potius quam tyranni vultus adaptandus fuit.“ — We have harped upon this string, both as a general principle and in its special reference to Cato, more than once, and, though

¹⁾ De vita sua, T. II, p. 45, edit. Morelli; cf. also §. 24 of our Treatise, and vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall, ch. XXIV, note 121. ²⁾ In Nabbe's ed. of Cicero, p. 1133. ³⁾ De Officiis, lib. I, c. 31.

we had no brilliant remarks to offer then, we may here at all events be brief. The entire matter must be self-evident to every reflecting individual, i. e. as well the truth and excellence of the axiom which Cicero lays down and from which he starts, as the indubitable and indisputable defectiveness and incorrectness of the application. If any action be per se criminal, in all men (and under all circumstances), its criminality cannot be removed, can still less be converted into aught glorious and heroic, by any peculiarity whatsoever in an individual's organization, as long and as far as such organization is normal and healthy; and the proof which would, at all events, have to be given, and which Cicero has not by any means given to our satisfaction, is this: that it was the Good in Cato's characteristic individuality which superinduced his voluntary death, and not, haply, just or in part rather the Ill, e. g. a ceremonious and external harshness in principle and demeanor, when circumstances would have justified, and might have even demanded, a certain measure and sort of flexibility, adaptation, submission. Our Roman moralist here places us on purely human ground, reduces us to something very like mere „subjective tact“, refers only unto what man owes unto himself: the possible duties unto the Divinity are taken into no account whatsoever, and such procedure levels at once a very heavy blow, methinks, at aught in the shape of absolute anti-suicidal ethics.

2. Returning to the Tusculan Questions, two passages there also ¹⁾ have appeared to me to admit of being pro-suicidally interpreted. The discussion turning upon bodily suffering, we read thus. „Quid est tandem, dii boni! quod laboremus? Portus enim praesto est, quoniam mors ibidem est, aeternum nihil sentiendi receptaculum.“ Klotz, ²⁾ whilst rebutting, in a manner quite as coarse as his name might seem to warrant, the assertions of e. g. Bentley, who had pronounced the words „quoniam — est“, a glossem, and Otellé, who had declared the „ibidem“ one, takes what must appear almost needless pains to demonstrate the reference of our passage to suicide, which reference, by the by, would remain equally manifest and strong, were we to set our seal on the above mentioned conjectural mutilations. Klotz's paraphrase runs thus. „Zur Zuflucht vor ihnen, d. h. langwierigen Schmerzen, die unentzählich geworden, ist ja der Hafen

¹⁾ Lib. V, 40 and 41. ²⁾ T. Q., kritisch berichtigt und erläutert, 1835, pp. 599, 600.

nahe, weil der (freiwillige) Tod eben daselbst ist, d. h. weil man in diesem Falle die Erlaubnis zu freiwilligem Tode hat, eine ewige Zussucht der Empfindungslosigkeit.“ He, moreover, comparing this passage with T. Q. lib. I, c. 30, finds both passages perfectly consonant, inasmuch as intolerable physical pains constitute in the former that „*iusta causa moriendi*“ which is stipulated for in the latter. And I agree with him. — Of less decisive pro-suicidal weight is, perhaps, the following passage, because of the ambiguousness and vagueness of the simile employed touching which vide, however, what we have said in §. 19, for Cicero here identifies his own view concerning our question with that of Epicurus and that of Hieronymus of Rhodes who was, as I am led to believe, one of the later Peripatetics. „*Mihi quidem in vita servanda videtur illa lex, quae in Graecorum conviviis obtinet (obtinetur?): aut bibat, inquit, aut abeat! (ἢ πῖθι ἢ ἀπίθι, as the Greek punning phrase is by Billerbeck said to run) et recte. Aut enim fruatur aliquis pariter cum aliis voluptate potandi; aut, ne sobrius in violentiam vinolentorum incidat, ante discedat: sic injurias fortunae, quas ferre nequeas, defugiendo relinquat!*“ Haec eadem, quae Epicurus, totidem verbis dicit Hieronymus.“

3. Were we, indeed, to pursue our journey through all Cicero's other philosophical writings in search of passages containing brief hints upon which a pro-suicidal construction might be put, it would certainly not prove by any means difficult to hunt up sundry dicta of his which could be turned to some account, e. g. that „*fortasse id optimum*“ of his ¹⁾ which is added to the citation of Epikure's opinion that a person suffering intensely ought to die; or, that „*jure*“ of his ²⁾ with which he comments on the fact that a Roman consul, because he had acted against the warning of the Aruspices, „*mortem sibi ipse conscivit*.“ But, there is occasionally some little difficulty in separating, on the one hand, between what is the mere statement of the opinions of others, the fictitious representatives of e. g. Epikurism and Stoicism, and what is the bona fide expression of his own opinions; and, on the other hand, between what is intended as veritable argument against the morality, and what is meant only in opposition to the consistency, of the views under consideration. I will, therefore, here break off this portion of our subject.

¹⁾ De finibus bonorum et malorum, lib. II, c. 29. ²⁾ De Divinatione, lib. II, c. 33.

and, though an interpreter cannot reasonably be required to do more than faithfully record the fact that Cicero was apparently, nay, really, himself unclear and unsettled about his own opinions on the point at issue, it might seem worth while to enquire: which scale in the balance of testimonies is most heavily weighted? And the more so, since the result we shall arrive at is the very opposite one to that which, if I mistake not, by far the greater number of christian moralists have believed themselves warranted in putting forward.

Dwelling, first of all, on the three main anti-suicidal passages above introduced, let us be on our guard against mere phrases and similes, and look carefully and closely behind what they screen and enshadow. It is true, Cicero repeatedly tells us that man is not to quit life „injussu Dei“, and equally often that he is not to do so „sine causa justa“; but, these two things are with him clearly intended to be synonymous, and interchangeable, and in this circumstance lies the vulnerable spot of his so-called anti-suicidal theory. Going a little further back with our thoughts, we may remember that Pythagoras and Sokrates employed the identical words „injussu Dei“, and Cicero certainly quotes those two ancient thinkers and teachers, and, therefore, seems to mean what they did. But, nevertheless, we must distinguish between him and them. As far as we know, or have any right to assume, their interdiction of suicide was *absolute* and *unvarying*. They postulated the existence and providence of a Supreme Being, inculcated continuous dependence on Him, and forbade man as such to make any deliberate deadly attack upon the mortal environment of his Self, or, to consider himself ever justified in voluntarily emancipating his immortal essence out of its temporary bodily encasement. All the Symbola of Pythagoras or Philolaos have this sense, as far as they have any definable meaning at all. Besides those we have already adduced, also, for instance, those which Götting and Olympiodoros communicate (vide §. 32). Likewise Sokrates speaks solely of awaiting the divine ἀνάγκη as something naturally or magisterially objective, and does not so much as even allude to aught like a subjective and an arbitrary anticipation of death. But, when Stoicism had stepped in with its very different meanings and objects, many thinkers who were not Stoics, but sincerely revered still the authority which had found its utterances on our topic in Plato's Phaedon, felt strongly tempted to fit, as it were, „the new cloth to the old garment.“ Thus, e. g. Epictetos, as we

have seen, with the two last of those phrases of his which we quoted Græce in the preceding §, to which Justus Lipsius, therefore, in diss. XXIII erroneously assigned a place among anti-suicidal testimonies, since they have really quite the opposite tendency; and thus, too, Olympiodoros himself who fancied that he was faithfully interpreting the mind of Sokrates, when he paraphrased those concluding words which we have given on p. 28 of §. 24 by introducing into them not only a manifestly Stole notion, but also a Stole technical expression: καὶ πάλιν ἐφεξῆς φησὶν (i. e. Sokrates) ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ἐξάγειν ἑαυτοῦς, εἰ μὴ μεγάλην ὁ θεὸς ἀνάγκην ἐπιπέμψῃ, οἷαν τὴν νῦν παρούσαν. And, if these later philosophers misunderstood or misconstrued Pythagorism and Sokratism to reconcile them to views which lay nearer their own taste and thought and harmonized better with the spirit and requirements of their Age, retained the words and similes, but smuggled into them a latitude which partially destroyed their real intenseness: is not Cicero very likely to have done the same? Are there not in his doctrinal edifice many back-doors out of which to escape into a justification of suicide, despite the existence of the one front-door „*jussu Dei*“ &c.? To endeavor to develop the doctrine about God either according to Pythagoras' and Sokrates' notions or according to those of Cicero cannot be supposed to constitute any portion of our present task, and I need not here add much to what I have already said on pp. 89, 90 of the last §. Could God be easily conceived and defined, He would not be God, not a Being infinitely exalted above poor human nature, inscrutably enveloped in the mystery of His own uniqueness. Who is, if He be at all, without beginning and without end, His own beginning and His own end, the One distinct from All, the originator, ruler, sustainer of all creation and each creature: His works we may see by day and by night, His qualities and principles we may guess at and endeavor to determine from what is around us and in us; — but to know Him — according to our usual trite application of the term knowledge — it was of old as it is still. We have read of that ancient Sage — Simonides was his name, nor would it be by any means difficult to gather other pagan sayings of a similar nature — who ever craved another and yet another day for his enquiry, and at length confessed that the longer he meditated, the more difficult the problem appeared to him; and we have also read in a reverent little book by a modern Sage of our own a passage which

runs thus:¹⁾ „know God! it will take thee, I suspect, to eternity to learn even the rudiments of this awful knowledge; more to the point to know what God bids thee do, and to do it.“ It is, I ween, even thus; and in this very thing lay the peculiar significance of Pythagorism and Sokratism. It was not their question, whether this or that so-called element, or all the elements together, constituted the Divine Essence, the primary source and the moving cause of Life and Being; their question was, rather, of a more mystical as well as a more practical kind. The Divinity, something entirely outside of us and infinitely above us, had shaped the bonds of life, whether they be iron or silken, and alone may sever them, and in the law of Nature or the State alone exercises his power, manifests his will, makes good his right. But, did Cicero believe and teach thus, even he who wrote a whole book, compilatory and barren, on the „Nature of the Gods“? Rome in the age of Cicero was not favorable to such believings and teachings, and Cicero, the statesman and the conservative, was not the man to rise in such matters above and far beyond his time and countrymen. Yea, if we could imagine him with the best of his pursuits and susceptibilities on some lonely island and in some retired dwelling — we should suppose him arriving at genuine Pythagorism and Sokratism on the point at issue; but, as matters in reality stand, his „injussu dei“, and NB. the „dominans ille in nobis deus“, which is only a sort of periphrasis of the Stoic τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικόν, can scarcely be entitled to the possession of any very decisive anti-suicidal weight.

It is true, Cicero's anti-suicidal utterances are, as far lengthier, so decidedly more eloquent than his pro-suicidal ones; but in the writings of men of his stamp and class the longest and most brilliant passages are not by any means always necessarily the most sincere and convincing ones. I should be extremely loth to urge or even hint that, because Cicero places the most impressive of his anti-suicidal testimonies on the lips of Scipio Africanus, he need not be understood as pronouncing those sentiments in his own person; but yet, on the one hand, I cannot but doubt that he ever would have seriously subscribed to yon emphatic „huc tibi aditus patere non potest“, and, on the other hand, we should very greatly err, were we to allow ourselves to see therein anything like all the anti-

¹⁾ Vide Latter Day Pamphlets by Thomas Carlyle.

suicidal reasonings which Macrobius in his celebrated Commentary thereon scrupulously develops to something like the following effect.

a. The soul ought to be after death released from all corporeal cupidities and emotions; but suicide originates in passions, e. g. fear, hatred, which are opposed to the purity of the soul, and would in and by itself as an act sully a soul which had even attained to its obligatory purity. b. Death ought to set the soul entirely free from the body so that it may soar heavenwards and starwards, whereas a violent, self-wrought death causes the soul to adhere all the more firmly to the body so that it, wandering about, haunts the grave or the spot where the deed was committed, whether by steel, or by poison. c. The body must quit the soul, when the secret binding power has of itself slackened and departed; for then the appointed time of destiny (*fatum, fatalia vitae tempora*) has, visibly and tangibly, been fulfilled: this alone is natural death; the soul, on the contrary, must not quit the body. d. Recompense in a future state of existence will be in accordance with the perfection to which man has attained in this life; and, therefore, as long as there is possibility of growth in proficiency, he must not precipitate his end; for, on the one hand, whoever leaves this life with vices clinging to him, cannot in the other world rid himself of them, thus making up for what he wantonly neglected, and, on the other hand, the longer life lasts, the greater is the power of self-purification. e. Even if, however, any one should have arrived at the utmost possible perfection, he yet may not lay hands upon himself in the hope of accelerating the fruition of beatitude, because, not to revert to the previously adduced reasons, hope itself, like fear, is a passion. — Macrobius, namely, does not profess to be standing with this circumstantial *raisonnement* of his any longer upon *Ciceronian* terrain, but, rather, upon Platonic and Plotinic ground: „*haec Platonicae sectae semina* (i. e. the *absolute* condemnation and interdiction of suicide laid down in *Phaedo*) *altius Plotinus exsequitur*“, he says himself; and, as will become evident from §. 32, he, probably, has here and there added something of his own to what he conceived and believed Plotinus to have taught; for in Plotin's extant writings not all the above arguments, some of which are deeply true, others rather questionable, and one savoring strongly of superstition, can be fairly traced. But, this only by the way. Returning to Cicero himself, and especially to his unstudied, and, therefore, all the more sincere, occasional allusions

to our topic in his Epistles: when he refers to his own reasons for not slaying himself (e. g. ad Quintum I, 3 and 4), is there aught resembling Blanco White's confession (vol. III, p. 147 of the work quoted in §. 3): „Nothing but a firm persuasion that self-destruction would be criminal in me prevents my putting it into execution. But my will is fixed: I am determined not to do wrong.“ Or, when he advises others, e. g. Cn. Domitius (epp. ad Diversos, VI, 22) against suicide: are his reasons not altogether of some such relative and external character as e. g. those which Voltaire (vide §. 18) advanced, when he endeavored to dissuade Frederick the Great from putting an end to his own life?

Tzschirner in an equally able and amiable little essay of his „von den Grundsätzen der Römer über den Selbstmord, und den Ursachen, welche sie diesen Gegenstand anders beurtheilen machten, als wir ihn zu beurtheilen pflegen“, says of Cicero briefly thus.¹⁾ „Already Cicero utters the principle that he to whom life affords no enjoyment, and on whom the fardels of fate press too heavily, may quit life“ (Q. T. V, 41); and then adds in a note what follows. „Cicero judges differently in another passage (ibid. I, 30), where that hovers before him which Plato in the Phaedon indicates. Cicero had no firm principles, and not rarely followed the inspirations of momentary feelings and suddenly awakened conceptions of the imagination in such manner that we must not marvel, if we encounter in his writings assertions one of which annuls the other.“ But a couple of years later, the same excellent writer on p. 141 of the work quoted in §. 15 recants this opinion, and expresses his conviction that the three first passages we have discussed under the head of anti-suicidal utterances ought to be regarded as designative of Cicero's real, i. e. unequivocally anti-suicidal, view!!

Supposing, then, our above estimate of the exact value attachable to yon three passages to be correct, no *veritable*, *essential* change in the views of Cicero need be supposed, or, can be demonstrated, so that an assertion which Gillies incidentally makes²⁾ would be far more bold than it is acute, viz. that Cicero was antagonistic to suicide prior to the death of Cato Uticensis, but after this event altered his opinion, or his tone, about an action which his *friend* had committed.

¹⁾ Magazin für Religions-, Moral- und Kirchengeschichte, herausgegeben von Stäudlin, B. II, erstes Stück, pp. 7, 8, 1803. ²⁾ Ethics of Aristotle, vol. I, p. 389. Vide also vol. II, p. 28, note.

— Indeed, a very few notices will suffice to disprove in the most direct and satisfactory manner the admissibility of this hasty hypothesis. We know that Cicero, still nobly faithful to the already vanquished party, had ventured to pen a „laus Catonis“, as soon as the intelligence of the patriot's voluntary death had reached him; and that Caesar, with a judicious and manly forbearance, contented himself with simply replying to it by an Anti-Cato.¹⁾ Both works are now lost. We, further, know that he has lauded Cato's death-deed in sundry passages of his writings, besides those we have already quoted.²⁾ However, he by so doing only made common cause with every cotemporary as well as post-temporary (cf. §. 17) Roman writer, Brutus alone, perhaps, excepted, whose book seems to have possessed only an indifferent literary worth,³⁾ and who, moreover, subsequently not only recanted his view, but even followed his relative's example: Νέος ὢν ἐγὼ καὶ πραγμάτων ἀπειρος οὐκ οἶδ' ἔπωκ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ λόγον ἀφήμα μέγαν. ἤτισταμην Κάτωνα διαχρησάμενον ἑαυτὸν, ὡς σὸχ ἔσιον οὐδ' ἀνδρὸς ἔργον ὑποχωρεῖν τῷ δαίμονι καὶ μὴ δέχεσθαι τὸ συμπίπτον ἀδεῶς, ἀλλ' ἀποδιδράσκων. Such are his own self-apologetic words⁴⁾ to Cassius shortly before the fatal engagement at Philippi (vide §. 28, p. 78). I am very far from being unable to conceive that Cato's death *might* have operated in the manner supposed by Gillies on so sensitive and vacillating a nature as Cicero's was; and something like a parallel instance occurs in the confession of the poet Cowper (vide his autobiographical sketch alluded to in §. 4). „I now wished for death, and found myself but little shocked at the idea of procuring it myself. I considered life as my property, and therefore at my disposal. *Men of great name*, I observed, had destroyed themselves; and *the world still retained the profoundest respect for their memories.*“ But, *dates*, the most stubborn of things, incontestably prove that the death of Cato formed in no manner or measure whatsoever a turning-point in Cicero's feelings, opinions, utterances on the theme of our investigation. The *de Republica*, in which he argues against suicide, was composed many years before the death of Cato; but so, too, were several of the *Epistles* according to which he himself contemplated the commission of suicide. In the *de Officiis* he grounds his vindication of suicide upon a reference

¹⁾ Dio Cass. 43, c. 13, and Plutarch's life of Cicero. ²⁾ E. g. epp. ad Diversos, lib. IX, 18: „at Cato praeclara“, &c. ³⁾ Cf. Abeken, Cicero in seinen Briefen, p. 311. ⁴⁾ Vitae parallelae; edid. Doehner, vol. II, p. 1195;

to Cato's death; but in the *de Senectute* he repudiates and condemns the same act, and — this work was composed most certainly a year or two *after* Cato's death, and, as it seems,¹⁾ within the last twenty months of his own life.

§. 31. PLUTARCH (in the first half of the 2nd cent. p. C.).

Among the „harbingers of Neo-Platonism“ as „pythagorasing platonicians“ sundry historians of Philosophy, e. g. Zeller in his extremely independent and acute work,²⁾ place Appulejus, Maximus Tyrius, Plutarch, and other men of a similar stamp, and thus distinguish, as it were, between Neo-Platonism in a wider and a more restricted acceptation of the term. The former is, then, represented by several pagan thinkers and writers, especially those just named, who flourished in the two first centuries of our era or thereabout, and whose characteristic peculiarity would seem to have been their leaning for support more especially upon Platonism, but who as philosophers were not of much note. Neo-Platonism proper, on the contrary, born in the 3rd cent. of our era in Alexandria, at that time the renowned emporium of both occidental and oriental knowledge and civilization, where the faiths and cultures of Greekdom, Judaism and Christianity met like three great cross-roads, attempted — I know not exactly what, nor did it itself, I ween, know exactly: from Ammonius Sakkas who may be said to have „watched over its cradle“ until Proklus who may be said, in the 5th century, „to have carried its bier.“ But to it our next § will be devoted.

Returning, then, to *non-Alexandrine* New Platonism, we considered it perfectly justifiable to adduce the testimony of Appulejus on our topic in §. 25, when speaking of Plato, in illustration of whose system it was given. Nor are the dicta of Maximus Tyrius particularly markeworthy, but rather vague and inconclusive, and even self-contradictory, so that we might almost have contented ourselves with the incidental references we have already made to them, when they tended to elucidate or corroborate any individual point which we chanced to be discussing. Since, however, few of my readers may have had the patience to peruse his 41 Dissertations, I will

¹⁾ Vide Schirlitz, *Borſchule zum Cicero*, p. 444, Ann. 2, and cf. also p. 474.

²⁾ *Die Philosophie des Griechens*, Th. III, erste Hälfte, p. 433 sqq. and zweite Hälfte, p. 524 sqq.

embrace this opportunity of intercalating some brief additional observations *coherently*. It, the said production, treats on all sorts of speculative and ethical questions, and is not by any means always very valuable in matter or interesting in form, howsoever acute and even witty some of the treatises may be. They rest, as it seemed to me, speaking quite in general, upon the basis of the Platonic definitions of Beauty and Virtue, but are occasionally even hyper-Platonically mystical, lead off e. g. into a veritable Demonology. Though he can scarcely be said to speak of our immediate topic in any very direct manner, the impression left on my mind is, nevertheless, that Maximus, if anything, condemned suicide. For instance, he describes a suicide from love with extreme disapprobation, views suicide sarcastically as a consequence of ungoverned passions of every sort, designates the end of Sardanapalus as the effect of a disease of the soul;¹⁾ and, finally, whilst speaking of the seeing and knowing of God, he expressly bids man wait until he is called home by a *natural* death, *tarrying* until then.²⁾ „It is quite certain that thou wilt then see Him, when he shall have called thee unto himself; but it will not last so very long, ere He calls thee (ὁ Θεὸς — καλέσει δὲ οὐκ εἰς μακρὸν, ἀνάμεινον τὴν κλήσιν): old age will suffice which will lead thee thither, and death, about which the timid, indeed, weep, terrified by its approach, but which a lover of God awaits with pleasure, looking forward to its approach with cheerful courage.“

But, Plutarch is in many respects so interesting, besides being so fruitful, an author that he must appear deserving of a detailed treatment also in connexion with our specific enquiry. Yet, already the extremely various contents of his numerous extant writings renders it, perhaps, impossible to affirm anything quite positive about his real position to the leading schools of ancient classical philosophy. Upon the whole, however, his pre-eminent noble-mindedness and sincerely pious bent would seem, I cannot help thinking, to have inclined him to treat the subject we are discussing with a sort of rather mild than vigorous distrust, and, whilst disposed to condemn it sometimes in something like Sokratic fashion, he also sometimes leans towards a defence of it in something like the manner of Stoicism;

¹⁾ Vide Dissert. XII, XVI, according to Heinsius' numerical arrangement.

²⁾ Diss. I, or, according to Davisius, XVII, §. 11, p. 205 of the London edit. 1740. Vide also the latter editor's brief note p. 565, and, if you like, Markland's additional note p. 684.

at least, some such sort of syncretistic dualism, if I may use this expression, appears to me pretty clearly traceable in those passages of both his „vitae parallelae“ and his „moralia“ in which he, albeit neither very explicitly nor very elaborately, makes mention of our present theme.

In the *Parallel Lives* which Plutarch evidently intended to be rather vehicles for the conveyance of moral instruction than critical contributions to historical research, he has occasion to introduce sundry celebrated persons who had died by their own hands, and he very naturally finds himself called upon, more especially in the appended *Comparisons*, to say some little about his own opinion on the said action itself.

Instances. „The manner of the death of neither of them ¹⁾ can exactly be praised; but that of Demetrius deserves the greater blame (ψεχτός μᾶλλον). For he willingly repaired into captivity, allowed himself to be imprisoned, and was glad still to gain a term of three years during which“ etc. The reader must be reminded that Demetrius, vide ch. 49 of his Life, had once really been on the point of stabbing himself, before he delivered himself up into the captivity of Seleukus, but, nevertheless, subsequently remained his prisoner two entire years, i. e. until his natural death took place, with a very long tether for his low and idle indulgences. — „Antony, on the contrary, put an end to his life, indeed in a timid, miserable, and disgraceful manner (δελῶς, οἰκτρῶς, ἀτίμως which epithets, however, manifestly refer only to his hesitation and indecision), but yet before he fell into the hands of his enemies.“ — „Finally, as regards the end of both men, ²⁾ we must compassionate the one, viz. Cicero, that he, so aged a man already, from cowardice hid himself from those who did not exactly anticipate Nature by much, and then was still executed. But, on the part of the other, viz. Demosthenes, though he made some attempt to prolong his life, the procuring, the preserving and the applying of poison deserve admiration (ἀγαστή μὲν ἡ παρασκευὴ τοῦ φαρμάκου καὶ τήρησις, ἀγαστή δὲ χρῆσις), and also that he, because Neptune could no longer afford safety to him, had recourse, as it were, to a higher altar, tore himself away from weapons and trabants, and laughed at Antipater's cruelty.“ —

¹⁾ Demetrius and Antonius compared, in fine. ²⁾ Demosthenes and Cicero compared, c. 5.

These two passages have, as far as the Biographies are concerned, struck me as exemplifying *the most strongly* Plutarch's *pro-suicidal* sentiments. However, similar sentiments may be inferred or divined also from sundry other passages, e. g. his remarks¹⁾ on Eumenes' letting himself be imprisoned and slain (Plutarch would evidently have thought much better of his end, if it had been a suicidal anticipation of such indignity and torture); and his wording of the exit of Lykurgos.²⁾ „And he determined here to end his life voluntarily, since he had arrived at exactly that age when, according to the nature of circumstances, one can just as well live as die. Consequently, he died by abstaining from all food, being convinced that with great statesmen also death must be not inefficacious or without influence on the State, but rather appear a meritorious action. Moreover, he discerned that death would be for himself, after he had accomplished the most beautiful works, indeed, a completion of his felicity.“ (He considers and represents throughout the Spartan legislator as one of the holiest among men, as one of the greatest favorites of the Gods.) Finally, however, he places on the lips of Kleomenes a somewhat lengthy only *relatively* pro-suicidal discourse. — we shall quote it in §. 34, when speaking of the laws of Sparta. —, in reply and opposition to Pherikion's *absolutely* pro-suicidal speech; and may not, perhaps,³⁾ the said discourse be regarded as embodying the most complete exposition of Plutarch's own views? If so, they were of a sort of almost Aristotelean or Platonic character rather than of a Stoic one, viz. to this effect: *under certain most urgent circumstances, but only then, self-slaughter is a legitimate asylum.* At all events, he subsequently says⁴⁾ of this same Spartan King: „Kleomenes intended to avenge himself for the insults and injustices he had suffered, but, the circumstances not favoring him, he slew himself with the greatest dauntlessness“ (αὐτὸν αὐτόλμωτος ἀνέβη). Nor do the allusions to our topic contained in Plutarch's *Moralia* tell a different tale.

In some of the *Essays*, then, most of which are of a philosophical-ethical character, and all of which, though they should treat of archaeological or physical themes, may be said to have a *moral*

¹⁾ In the last few lines of the comparison between Sertorius and Eumenes. ²⁾ Life of Lykurgos, c. 24. ³⁾ Cf. Thucydides, de bello Pelop., I, 22. ⁴⁾ Cap. 3 of Agis and Kleomenes compared with Tiberius and Caius Gracchus.

purpose, whence the collective name „Moralia“, Plutarch utters his own opinions on our subject simply and briefly, as chance suggests them more or less opportunely; in others they occur with a controversial aim against the Stoics.

To the excellent and popular treatise „consolatio ad Apollonium“ we alluded already on p. 142 of §. 11, and there gave a passage which seemed to possess a kind of Neo-Platonic *anti-suicidal* force. I will, however, add here to what was there said two things. Firstly, at the commencement (c. 2 in fine) of that treatise he appears to lament that „many from affliction even take away their own lives.“ Secondly. That somewhat kindred passage which Grotius quoted from Themistius, and about which I in the said § confessed my ignorance, would seem, as I have since read in Wytttenbach's „Animadversiones in Plutarchi Opera Moralia“, ¹⁾ to belong to Plutarch himself, not to Themistius, as Grotius had (following Stobaeus, Serm. CXIX) taken for granted. It is, namely, not to be found in Themistius' extant writings, and this external reason as well as its internal character induced Wytttenbach to conjecture that, in all probability, it stood in one of Plutarch's lost treatises de Anima. What Grotius quotes is: Ἀπολλόσεσθαι γὰρ τὸν ἀποθνήσκοντα, καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν ἀπόλουσιν καλεῖσθαι. But what immediately follows is curious enough to deserve quoting on account of the whimsical, but significant, mystical etymology given of the word βίος, life. Τοῦτο (i. e. σῶμα, the body) γὰρ δέμας ὀνομάζουσιν, ὡς δεδεμένης ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνταῖθα παρὰ φύσιν. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ πέφυκεν εἶναι κατέχεται βίᾳ, καὶ τὸ δεδεῖσθαι τὴν τῆς βίαν τάττην παραγαγόντας, ἐνὸμαζαν βίον. — In another much briefer, and apparently only fragmentally preserved, treatise; ²⁾ Plutarch pronounces the fact that „many persons stab themselves or hurt themselves from a rock, and that Hegesias succeeded by his discourses in inducing many to starve themselves to death, not an evidence of the non-existence of natural self-love in man, but rather, on the contrary, a self-attested proof of a diseased and suffering state of the soul which tears man out of his proper nature“ (ταῦτα δὲ εἶναι νεοσμήματα καὶ πάθη ψυχῆς τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἐξισταίντος τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὡς αὐτοὶ καταμεμπτουῶσιν ἑαυτῶν). — But, on the other

¹⁾ T. H., pp. 603, 604, and cf. pp. 598, 599, in the Leipzig edit. 1831, the Fragmentum appended to the animadversiones in librum Plutarchi de sera numinis vindicta. ²⁾ De amore prolis, c. 5.

hand, in a far more elaborate and searching treatise,¹⁾ whilst comparing life with a voyage, he literally maintains that, when the tempest becomes overwhelming, it is perfectly permissible, nay, even suitable and laudable, to hasten out of the leaky vessel into the near haven, i. e. to release the distressed soul by a voluntary death (παρὰ λόγου δὲ τινος καὶ μεγάλου καταλαβόντος καὶ κρατήσαντος, ἔργος ὁ λιμὴν καὶ πάρεστιν ἀπονήξασθαι τοῦ σώματος, ὥσπερ ἐφολκίου μὴ στέγοντος). Which tenet not only, but which simile itself likewise are manifestly of genuine Stoic spirit and cast. — Nevertheless, as an Academic or Eklektic, or whatever else you like to call him, Plutarch evidently disrelished the Stoic theory concerning also suicide; and in two of the dissertations²⁾ which he has penned for the express purpose, we might say, of representing the absurdities and self-contradictions of the Stoic system in general, he does not fail to ridicule and vituperate likewise that matter of the eulogos exagoge of the sophos as absurd and self-contradictory. It were, methinks, over-hasty to affirm that in the heat and zeal of argument and opposition Plutarch judged quite fairly of this latter feature of Stoicism, though, perhaps, I ought to have adduced the one or the other passage contained in these dissertations, when I was discussing stoicism itself; for they are certainly better calculated to throw light upon the doctrines of Zenon and more especially Chrysippos than on Plutarch's own tenets. The general impression which the perusal of them has left on my mind, however, is this: that Plutarch therein combats less against suicide per se than against suicide à la Zenon and Chrysippos, and that, though he certainly did not approve of the dictum that the wise and happy as such ought to die voluntarily, it does not by any means follow that he would have been equally loath to affirm that the over-tried and ill-starred ought not occasionally to do so. Let the following brief extract³⁾ suffice as testimony: καὶ παρὰ τὴν ἔννοιάν ἐστιν, ἀνθρώπων, ὃ πάντα τάχαθ' ἀπέρεστι, καὶ μηδὲν ἐνδεὶ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ τὸ μακάριον, τοῦτω καθήκειν ἐξάγειν ἑαυτόν. Ἐπὶ δὲ μᾶλλον, ὃ μηδὲν ἀγαθόν ἐστι, μηδ' ἔσται, τὰ δεινὰ δὲ πάντα καὶ τὰ δυσχερῆ καὶ κακὰ ἀπέρεστι καὶ παρέσται διὰ τέλους, τοῦτω μὴ καθήκειν ἀπολέγεσθαι τὸν βίον, ἂν μὴ τι διὰ τῶν ἀδιαφόρων αὐτῷ προσγένηται.

¹⁾ De animi tranquillitate, vol. VII, pp. 860, 861 in Reiske's edit. ²⁾ De Repugnantibus Stoicis, and adversus Stoicos de Communibus Notitiis. ³⁾ From the latter Dissertation, vol. X, pp. 387, 388 in Reiske's edit.

§. 32. NEO PLATONISM.

We are now arrived at the *last* metamorphosis which the Philosophy of Classical Paganism underwent, at what might, perhaps, be not inaptly called the *second childhood* of Greek (and Roman) speculation: when a people's speculative thinking as such in its clearness, vigor, and independence has become all but exhausted, the said people, loath to give up the appearances, though the realities have departed, begin to dream and to allegorize, to bewilder and mystify themselves. Or, may and must not Neo Platonism be pronounced to have talked much undigested sublimity and indigestible profundity e. g. about pure intellect, ideal intuition, magical theorems, and ascetic practices?

Pythagorism (or Orphism) with its doctrines of metempsychosis and the soul's endurance of a period of bodily probation and purification had already something genuinely Eastern about itself (cf. e. g. §. 37); but the subsequent Greek schools had, as we have seen, successively, and in part also successfully, endeavored to modify and correct the said doctrines by disrobing them of their mystical elements and counteracting their ascetical tendencies; New Platonism, on the contrary, revived them with renewed zeal, and enforced them with increased enthusiasm: albeit unto comparatively little purpose, despite the unquestionable talents, erudition, eloquence of such men as Plotinus, Porphyrius, Iamblichus, Julianus, Proklus, sages and saints in their own manner and measure, according to their own creed and aim.

However, ere *they* had begun to work, *Christianism* had already appeared on the stage as the great turning-point between the ancient and the modern world; whilst they were working, this new spirit of Insight and impulse to Devotion were spreading gradually, but surely, by supplying spiritual nurture suited to the common needs of civilized mankind; and, before they had ceased to work, the common sense of the subjects of the Roman Empire had, under Divine Providence, as we believe, welcomed and embraced *that* Religion which a Celsus, a Porphyrius, a Hierokles had attempted to check and put down by unsparing use of their most formidable arguments of sophistry and ridicule, and from which an Ammonius Sakkas and a Julianus had apostatized, after they had, apparently at least, once espoused it. —

Classical Paganism had spent itself; no struggle, howsoever bravely undertaken or nobly meant, could succeed in fanning the doomed embers into a burning fire and a bright flame again; and spiritually true, even if historically a bare fiction, the record is that Julian, the Imperial Apostate, exclaimed with his expiring breath: *νεκρώσας Γαλλοῖς* (Theod. H. E. lib. III, c. 21).

Be this little sufficient by way of introduction. What we have and wish to communicate about the general bearing of Neo Platonism on our topic in relation even to Christianity itself will most fitly attach itself to what we shall extract from, and annotate on, the writings themselves of some of the above-mentioned coryphaei of this school.

I. Plotinos (in the 3rd cent. p. C.).

His reverential and enthusiastic pupil and biographer enumerates¹⁾ as the sixteenth of Plotin's *earliest* literary performances one which bore the title *περὶ ἐξαγωγῆς* or *περὶ τῆς ἐκ τοῦ βίου ἐξόδου ἐξαγωγῆς*, a d. thus the ninth book of the first Ennead of Porphyry's collection of Plotin's writings is superscribed. Too short to require a mere abstract of its contents, and peculiar and significant enough to deserve patient perusal, it shall here find a place Anglicæ entire. „Do not compel the soul to emigrate out of the body; for, compulsory emigration will always cause something besides itself (the soul) to go along with it.²⁾ In general, wherein else does then exition consist, except in the transposition of one's self into another place? The soul, however, ought to wait until the body shall have entirely removed itself from it, so that it has not to go away from the body, but is, on the contrary, already entirely out of it. But, how does the body remove itself? When no part of the soul is any longer bound by it, and, moreover, the body is no longer able to bind the soul, because its harmony with the possession of which also at the same time the possession of the soul was connected, no longer exists. How now, if any one take pains to separate the body? In this case, however, he would use violence and himself separate himself: not the body would dismiss the soul. And, if such a person separate himself, he is yet not free from passionate impressions, his act being rather accompanied by either indignation, or grief, or anger: which

¹⁾ Porphyrius, *vita Plotini*, c. 3, and cf. also c. 4 in fin. ²⁾ i. e. „such parts of the body as are, according to the course of Nature, not yet used up, will, by clinging to the soul, cause the latter to be still in a mixed state of Being, though it sought to attain by suicide to a pure state of Being.

things he, nevertheless, ought not to allow to operate.¹⁾ Haply, the application of poisons for the purpose of promoting the emigration of the soul is likewise not salutary to the latter; and, if to every one an appointed time is given, nothing can prosper that is undertaken prior to such time, unless it be, as we said, necessary. Finally, if every one receives *yonder* a superior station accordingly as he was qualified at the season of his exit, he must not conduct the soul out of the body, since perfectionation was still possible here.²⁾

Inasmuch as Porphyry's collection of Plotin's writings is acknowledgedly *incomplete*, and, inasmuch as this ninth book of the first Ennead is disproportionately *brief* as compared with the other books of the Enneads, and, inasmuch as at all events the commencement of this same book is extremely *abrupt*, and, inasmuch as, finally, certain obscurities prevail throughout it, the surmise of sundry critics that we have here before us a mere *fragment*, and, perhaps, even a more or less *vitiating* fragment, of the above-mentioned work of Plotin's seems anything but unreasonable. — But, be this as it may, and aphoristic and somewhat mystical though this Plotinic argumentation be, the *summa summarum* thereof would seem indisputably to be thus: the necessity of quitting the body without passion, the wisdom of employing all possible time for self-perfectionation, and the duty of biding patiently the end of the term decreed by Providence — emphatically interdict suicide, save and except, as we stated and endeavored to show in §. 13, in the one solitary instance of menacing and incipient Insanity.

Nevertheless, unless I be very much mistaken, in two almost consecutive passages in another book of the first Ennead (earlier in point of position, viz. lib. IV, but later in point of composition, according to Porphyry's account in the above quoted life), one of the most beautiful treatises of his extant works, Plotinos²⁾ pronounces suicide in case of *captivity*, or *extreme bodily suffering*, though not exactly necessary, or praiseworthy, or advisable, yet at all events justifiable or pardonable. „Will it be an Evil unto him, if he is led away captive? πάντῃ ἔστιν ὁδὸς ἐξέρχαι (there is, to be sure, everywhere a way for escape, i. e. he possesses the power of freeing himself by death), if he should not find it possible to be happy

¹⁾ Here that passage comes in which we discussed minutely in §. 13.

²⁾ De Beatitude, pp. 67, 68 in Crœuser's edit. On the verbs ἐξέρχαι and ἀπαλθεῖν as here employed vide what was said in §. 11.

in such a condition." „Many are even better off than before, when led away as captives; καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς δὲ βαρυνόμενοι ἀπαλθεῖν (besides, it stands in their own arbitration, if they are over-burdened, to walk off, i. e. to make themselves free); if, however, they abide in captivity, they do so either for some good reason, in which case there is nothing really terrible in their condition, or without any reason, in which case they ought not to become unto themselves a cause of perturbation." — „But, when the virtuous man's (του σπουδαιου) pains are very vehement, as far (or, as long) as it is possible for him to bear them, he will bear them; but, when they by their excess overwhelm him and carry him, as it were, out of himself, he will yet not deport himself miserably in the midst of such great pains, but his own proper (intellectual) light will shine within himself, like unto a light in a watch-tower, though tempestuous winds and heaving waves be outside raging. But, if he is no longer sensible,¹⁾ and is about to die in consequence of his intensely increasing pains? Indeed, if they do in such wise extend, he will consider what is requisite (or, necessary) to be done; οὐ γὰρ ἀφῆρηται τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἐν τούτοις (for, in these cases, the freedom of the will, i. e. self-determination, is not taken away).

These are the *most detailed* passages on our subject in the Enneads, but they are neither very clear, if each be taken by itself, nor exactly harmonious, if the one be compared with the other. We shall, however, have to revert to Plotinos, when we are speaking of Porphyrius. Here in passing a literary parallel.

The churchfather Origenes had been at the same time as Plotinos a disciple of Ammonius Sakkas'. What influence Alexandrine Eklekticism may have exercised on his speculative peculiarities, we need not stop to enquire; his views, however, as far as we can gather them from merely incidental allusions,²⁾ were decidedly anti-suicidal; for he mentions with evident disapprobation that some Pagan nations considered those happy who hang, or those purified who burn, themselves, declares emphatically that εὐλογος ἐξαγωγή οὐδαμία ἡμῖν εἶναι δοκεῖ, εἰ μὴ ἡ δι' εὐσέβειαν καὶ ἀρετὴν μόνη, and remarks with equal clearness and energy that Christians must and will bear patiently the sufferings incidental to life as παρασμοὶ τῆς ψυχῆς, by means of which the human

¹⁾ Vide again §. 13. ²⁾ Contra Celsum, lib. V, c. 27, and lib. VIII, c. 55, Opera omnia, edid. Delarue, 1733, T. I, pp. 597, 783, 784.

soul is, according to Scripture, tried as gold is by fire, that it may become manifest, whether it deserve to be punished or admired. — At the same time, however, he had, perchance, imbibed in part from the source under mention that mystico-ascetic turn which induced him to commit a rash act which one verdict of the christian church ¹⁾ has, albeit somewhat strangely, designated (a species of) suicide: „ὁ αἰρω-
τηριασας ἑαυτὸν shall not be made clerical; for he is αὐτοφονεύτης
ἑαυτοῦ, and an enemy to the work of God.“

II. Porphyrios (in the 3rd cent. p. C.).

„Hence, as long as any one is discordant about food, and contends that this or that thing should be eaten, but does not conceive that, if it were possible, we should abstain from all food, assenting by this contention to his passions, such a one forms a vain opinion, as if the subjects of his dissension were things of no consequence. *He, therefore, who philosophizes, will not separate himself* (from his terrestrial bonds) *by violence; for he who is compelled to do this, nevertheless, remains there from whence he was forced to depart. Nor must it be thought, that he who strengthens these bonds, effects a thing of small importance.* ²⁾ — It was the underlined portion of this somewhat obscurely worded passage, viz. the words βία μὲν τίνων ἑαυτὸν ὁ φιλοσοφῶν οὐκ ἐξάξει· βιαζόμενος γὰρ, οὐδὲν ἦντον ἐκεί μινει, ὅθεν ἀπαλθεῖν βιάζεται· οὐ μὴν τὸν δεσμὸν παχύων ἀδιάφορον τι πράττειν ἡγήσεται — which Lucas Holstenius fixed ³⁾ upon by way of proving Porphyry's anti-suicidal opinions. „Ita tamen ut vinculum illud, quo natura corpus animamque colligavit, violenter abrumpendum negârint, nec animae a mortalis vitae statione absque supremi imperatoris jussu decedendum. Socrates enim in Phaedone multis rationibus αὐτοχειρίαν dissuadet: Cujus sententiam Porphyrium quoque secutum videmus lib. I de abstin. qui cum duplicem discessum animae a corpore dixisset; unum quidem violentum, alterum vero qui fit περ-
θεῖ καὶ κατὰ λόγον (i. e. by persuasion and reason), quem in Plotini vita εὐλογον ἐξαγωγὴν appellat: primum illum, cum universa Platonis schola (?), *ut impium et animae noxium his verbis damnat.*“ De Rhoer, on the contrary, in the note on this passage in his edit. of

¹⁾ Canones apostolici, §§. 21—23: which work is ascribed by some to Clemens Alexandrinus, by others to some earlier writer, and which at all events contains along with much that is absurd also much of what is very excellent. ²⁾ De abstinence ab esu animalium, lib. I, c. 38, init. ³⁾ De vita et scriptis Porphyrii Philosophi dissertatio, c. 8, pp. 48, 49, as appended to the Cambridge edit. of the works of Porphyry, 1655.

1767, is of opinion „επι hic posset de ἀφύστασι, cum quis a sensibus se abducatur, atque animum corpore quasi educat, ne ejus mole et adfectibus impediatur, quam doctrinam passim inculcat.“ And, no doubt, Porphyry does speak frequently and at considerable length, both in other parts of the work under discussion¹⁾ and in other writings of his,²⁾ about this same ἀφύστασις, the mere abduction and abstraction of the mind and soul from the senses and the body. (Plätinos calls it ὁ χωρισμὸς ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος,³⁾ and Sokrates in the Phaedo had characterized it as the *philosophic death*, i. e. a separation which takes place during earthly life by reflection and introspection and the conversion of the soul to the spirit, consequently, a sort of mystic death or ascetic life). Nevertheless, I cannot but very strongly incline *not* to agree with de Rhoer's interpretatory hypothesis on the passage previously quoted. Firstly. The logical parallelism, already *most clearly* expressed in Phaedo, and constantly, but somewhat confusedly now and then, re-echoed in Neo-Platonism, between separation or deliverance of the imprisoned soul from the fetters of the sensual affections and the emission or redemption of the soul out of the corporeal bonds, is so natural that any discussion of the commendableness and desirableness of self-denial, self-mortification might easily become a bridge over which the philosophic moralist would quickly pass to *warn against, and to reprehend, veritable self-destruction* as an excess, deplorable, injurious, unlawful, into which there was yet considerable danger of becoming deceived and misled. Secondly. Inasmuch as Porphyry has discussed the „mors philosophica“ in numerous other parts of the work before us, we might the rather take Holstenius' explanation of the passage under debate as the more probable one, and it is, doubtless, the one which the words themselves place nearest to us; Zeller, too, has not hesitated to see in it *a disapproval of suicide*.⁴⁾

We should, on the one hand, most certainly not deem ourselves warranted in ascribing to Porphyry's various narratives (vide §. 37) of the suicidal customs of sundry Barbaric (Indian) peoples a pro-suicidal drift, because they chance not to be accompanied by any expressions of censure; but, on the other hand, no further anti-suicidal utterances are, as far as I am aware, to be met with in his writings,

¹⁾ E. g. lib. I, §. 32; III, §. 26; IV, §. 21. ²⁾ Sententiae VII—IX, XII, and cf. also XXIX, XXXII, XXXIV. ³⁾ Enn. I, lib. III, c. 15. ⁴⁾ Ubi supra, X, lib. III, §. 18, p. 861, Num. 2.

if we except the following incidental communication (lib. II, c. 47 of the *de abstinentia*). „Hence theologists have rightly paid attention to abstinence. And these things were indicated to us by a certain Egyptian, who also assigned a most natural cause of them, which was verified by experience. For, since a depraved and an irrational soul, when it leaves the body, is still compelled to adhere to it, since the souls also of those men who die by violence are detained about the body: *this circumstance should prevent a man from forcibly expelling his soul*“ (ὁ δὲ τοῦ μὴ βία αὐτὸν ἐξάγειν ἢ κολυπαῖν) etc. Thomas Taylor, whose version I have just used, has appended on this occasion the following note.¹⁾ „Reisk, with his usual stupidity, where merely verbal emendations are not concerned, says that this Egyptian is Plotinus, whose country was Lycopolis, in Egypt. But what instance can be adduced, in all antiquity, of the disciple of a philosopher speaking of his preceptor in this indefinite manner? Is it not much more probable that this Egyptian is the priest mentioned by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinos*, who, at the request of a friend, which friend was, perhaps, Porphyry himself, exhibited to Plotinus, in the temple of Isis, at Rome, the familiar daemon, or, in modern language, the guardian angel of that Philosopher?“ — That this same note of our self-sufficient, though meritorious, modern English neo-platonic enthusiast's is not exactly hyper-courteous to Reiske, everybody will easily discern; but methinks, it is into the bargain quite uncalled-for, as, perhaps, the following few simple remarks may tend to show.

Porphyry is here speaking of „the theologists“, and it is perfectly possible that he really did not mean, as Reiske also supposes him to have done, Plotinus by „the theologist“ par excellence.²⁾ But, in the passage under consideration the original has ὁ Ἀιγύπτιος (κατ' ἐξοχὴν), and not merely „a certain Egyptian“, as Taylor translated; and, unless my memory sadly deceive me, I have somewhere distinctly found that the disciples of Plotinus were really in the habit of calling him κατ' ἐξοχὴν „the Egyptian.“ Indeed, it would seem to have been a common practice among the Neo Platonists to dignify their leading teachers by some specific epitheton: thus, for instance, Ammonius Sakkas was called „the God-taught“ (θεοδίδακτος), Por-

¹⁾ Select Works of Porphyry, 1823, p. 82. ²⁾ Lib. II, c. 36, where vide also Taylor's note, and cf. what was said already in §. 23.

phyry „the philosopher“, Iamblichus „the divine.“ In the altogether most ridiculous story to which Taylor alludes (de vita Plotini, c. 7) the words in the original are Ἀγνῆτος γὰρ τις ἴσους. I myself therefore incline to believe with Reiske, de Rhoer who in his note expressly says that the Egyptian in the passage before us is nobody but Plotinus, and Zeller who (ubi supra, *Æh.* III, *Hälfte* 2, p. 860) refers to our passage with the express words „unter Berufung auf Plotin.“ If, however, the said passage, which Porphyry employs for the twofold purpose of warning against the commission of suicide and the consumption of animal food, appertain to Plotinus, it must be conceived as *absolutely* anti-suicidal, and, consequently, clashes somewhat with the passages we have previously adduced from the Enneads themselves. However, let us not on this occasion overlook that in Plotin's lengthy treatise against the Gnostics,²⁾ there also occur sundry passages from which, *though they convey mere hints*, we must derive the impression that he condemned suicide in unmodified wise. (Vide Ficini's argumentum to Enn. I, lib. IX, to Enn. II, lib. IX in fine, and *ibid.* his superscription to c. 18.)

Porphyry's above-mentioned work on abstinence from animal food is, to speak in modern parlance, a sort of defence of Vegetarianism which, despite much of beauty, purity and loftiness in thought and sentiment, abounds with exaggerations, superstitions, and absurdities. Nevertheless, the churchfather Hieronymus did not disdain to incorporate entire sections of it with one of his own writings; and, perchance, this same sainted Coenobite owed not a little of his madly extravagant zeal for mortification of the flesh to the influence of suchlike compositions. In the identical work, however, Hieronymus (vide §. 70) puts forth his decided condemnation of suicide. Indeed, nobody can fail to be aware of the resemblance and affinity between various elements and features of Neo Platonism and Mediaeval Monachism. According to both, the body was something at best merely accidental and subordinate, and ought to be mortified and reduced, in order that the spiritual part of man, as his veritable self, might be helped out and helped on. Thence, for instance, Luther¹⁾ did not scruple, when preaching on Paul's words Romans XIII, 14 (which he very rightly renders „*und wartet des Fleisches, doch so daß ihr nicht*“ u. s. w., whereas in the English version the negation is taken

¹⁾ *Bertr.* *Æh.* XII, pp. 23, 24 in Walch's edit. ²⁾ Vol. II, pp. 395—397.

into the entire exhortation), to proclaim the immoderate abstinence from flesh-meat, even when illness would render animal food requisite, a species of subtle and undesigned, but still manifestly God-forbidden, suicide. „Es lobet Person die Carthäuser, daß sie nicht Fleisch essen, auch in der Krankheit, ob sie drob sollten sterben; so ist der große Mann betrogen worden von der abergläubischen englischen Geißlichkeit. Wie aber, wenn sie Gott für Mörder wird richten ihres eigenen Leibes? Es mag ja kein Orden, Statut oder Gelübde geschehen wider Gottes Gebot; und obs geschähe, so gilt's nicht, als wenig als wenn du gelobtest deine Ehe zu brechen. Nun hat Gott hier durch St. Paulum verboten solchen Mord über eigenen Leib; und Wider Gottes Verbot hilft kein Verbiehen, ob es schon alle Engel thäten. — But also in a *practical* point of view. Or, does not the following incident which Porphyry narrates of himself ¹⁾ remind us of what we shall have to discuss as the effect of monastic acedia in §. 73? He is speaking of Plotin's extreme insight into human character so that he immediately discerned every body's habits and disposition, and discovered their most hidden thoughts and intentions, and then proceeds thus. „He perceived of me, Porphyrius, when I once intended to kill myself (ἐξάγειν ἑμαυτὸν τοῦ βίου). Whilst I was at home, he suddenly came to me and said: this thy design, O Porphyrius, has not its cause in the mind, but arises from a bodily evil, haply, a bilious disease (ἐκ μελαγχολικῆς τῆς νόσου). Therefore, I ought to remove out of Rome. I followed his counsel and repaired into Sicily, because I heard that a certain Probus, an excellent man, dwelt in the vicinity of Lilybaeum. Thus I, then, indeed became rid of my (suicidal) inclination (προθυμία), but at the same time this circumstance prevented me from remaining with Plotinos until his death.“ — Nor is what the Emperor Julian, speaking of himself in the third person, relates of himself, ²⁾ altogether dissimilar, unless certain expressions in this allegorical narrative of his own history and mission in the world must be understood figuratively. „When, now, he had grown into a youth and looked back on the multitude of ill that had befallen him among his relatives and cousins, he designed to hurl himself, perplexed by his numerous calamities, into *Tartarus*. When, however, Helios, benevolently minded towards

¹⁾ Vita Plotini, c. 7 in fin. ²⁾ Vide Neander's exquisite monograph Ueber den Kaiser Julianus und sein Zeitalter, 1812, pp. 97, 98. He refers us to Orat. VII, p. 227.

him, and Athene, who watches over man, had sunk him into a deep sleep, and *diverted him from this thought*, etc. (By the by, in such of his works as I have perused I have not met with any exactly anti-suicidal passage; but, perhaps, his silence on Otho (in the *Caesares*), his severe mention of Magnentius, and sundry beautiful reflections in *orat.* I (vide e. g. p. 45 in the Paris edit. of his works, 1630) imply a sort of indirect disapproval of suicide).

III. Olympiodorus (in the 6th cent. p. C.).

We have had occasion to speak of, or to allude to, this Neo-Platonic philosopher already in e. g. §§. 13, 24, 25, 31; which same §§, however, were not only penned, but also printed off (vide p. 115 of §. 31), before I had had an opportunity of gaining access to Dr. Finckh's edit. of his commentary on *Phaedo*,¹⁾ at which circumstance I must now express my sincere regret, since an earlier use of this interesting publication would, doubtless, have aided me considerably, and might, perhaps, have helped me not only to do fuller justice to some parts of my theme, but likewise, it may be, to avoid the one or the other inaccuracy which has, I must fear, crept into my treatment of it.

All the extant copies of the said anything but completely preserved Commentary,²⁾ the beginning of which is at all events lost, commence with an elaborate discussion of our very topic. Olympiodor, after a brief prelude, indicative of the process he intends to pursue, proposes *three* arguments of his own by force of which he would fain establish the religious or philosophical inadmissibility of suicide in general (*ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τῆς λέξεως φέρε οἰκτιροῦν ἐπιχειροῦμεν τοῦτο αὐτὸ δεξιόμεν, ὅτι οὐ δαὶ ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοῦς*), and they are to about the following effect. 1. God is the providence of this world; and does not, as it were, shut himself up in mere self-contemplation; and the true philosopher, taking God as his model for imitation, in like manner ought not to lead a solely inward reflective life, but, on the contrary, to exercise, without losing his purity, a sort of provi-

¹⁾ Olympiodori Philosophi Scholia in Phaedonem, ex libris scriptis edidit C. E. Finckh, Heilbronnæ, 1847. We are concerned, however, only with pp. 1—10 thereof. ²⁾ Cousin has given in the *Journal des Savants* (Année 1834, pp. 321—327, 425—434, 482—491, and Année 1835, pp. 109—120, and 136—151) a very complete account and a partial analysis of the MSS under the heading: „du Commentaire inédit d'Olympiodore sur le Phédon, d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque royale de Paris, and d'un second „Commentaire“ etc.“ Vide for our immediate purposes more especially pp. 425—432 of the first, and pp. 112, 113 of the second, notice.

destial activity over inferior things, and to manifest and verify the beauty and strength of his character by preserving himself uncorrupted and proving incorruptible, whilst still subjected to the body; for it is, at best, a comparatively easy thing to live in purity, after death shall have effected the separation of the soul from the body. — This argument seems to me more or less original. — 2. God is present in all things, though they be so much lower than His spiritual essence: and similarly, the human soul ought to continue its presence in its bodily encasement. — This argument all but coalesces with the previous one. — 3. Only voluntary ties ought to be voluntarily loosened, but involuntary ones involuntarily; and, inasmuch as physical life is an involuntary tie, we ought to let it be terminated by natural death, i. e. without the intercession of our own will; whereas only the life of the senses is a voluntary tie, and it we ought, on the contrary, to end voluntarily, i. e. by the purification of ourselves. — This argument has come before us more than once already, e. g. in Cicero's *Cato major* and in *Porphyrus*.

Glancing, however, also at other portions of his argumentation, we cannot fail to discern that Olympiodor would fain interpret Socrates' and Plato's and Plotin's anti-suicidal utterances as vaguely and loosely as possible, even sometimes at the expense of their literal meaning; additionally, from the circumstantiality with which he brings forward the Stoic pro-suicidal reasons (vide what we quoted in §. 13) we may almost conclude that he strongly inclines to approve and embrace them: and, indeed, taking into due consideration his own comments thereon, given as it were behind the shield of mere explanation, they would seem to convey as his own opinion that, though it would not be justifiable to destroy one's self from mere regard to the body, yet one might justly do so sometimes on account of the mind, i. e. in case man's mental or moral life should have sustained injury, or be exposed to suffer hurt. However, he gives on p. 6 his own opinion in the following words: *τί οὖν ἡμεῖς φάμεν; εἰς ἀντίφασιν γὰρ περίεστη ὁ λόγος· πῶς γὰρ καὶ ἀθέμιτον τὸ ἐξάγειν ἑαυτὸν καὶ εὐλογον; ἥ οὐ δεῖ μὲν ἐξάγειν ἑαυτὸν, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ σώματι· πρὸς κακῷ γὰρ ἐστὶ τοῦτο τῷ σώματι· ἀλλὰ καὶ εὐλογον ἐξάγειν ἑαυτοὺς διὰ μείζον ἀγαθὸν συντελοῦν τῇ ψυχῇ, ὅσον ὡς ἡνίκα βλάπτεται ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος. ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ βουλεύομενος ἀκρίνα αἰρεῖται, οἷς ἰλάσσονα μὲν κακὰ ἔπεται, μείζονα δὲ ἀγαθὰ, καὶ ὥσπερ ἀνόσιον μὲν φιλῶ τυπτομένῳ μὴ ἀμύνειν, εἰ δὲ τύπτοιο ὑπὸ*

πατρός, οὐκ εὐλογον ἀμύνειν, οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἀθέμιτον ἐξάγειν
 ἑαυτὸν διὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ εὐλογόν ποτε διὰ τὴν ψυχὴν, λυσσασαίνοντος
 αὐτῇ ποτε τούτου.

His mythico-mystical arguments on our topic, to which a passing allusion shall be made in §. 37, I defy anybody to understand at this time of day, albeit, for instance, Dr. F. W. Krummacker's series of poetico-allegorical sermons on the Song of Solomon, very celebrated and popular in certain modern theological circles, are not a whit more rational and equally baseless.

Before taking leave, however, of Olympiodor's communications, I may as well mention that he introduces us to a *Philolaic* anti-suicidal symbolum which had not hitherto occurred to our notice: Ἀπίοντι εἰς ἱερὸν οὐκ ἐπιστρέφασθαι καὶ ἐν ὁδῷ μὴ χίζειν ξύλα, i. e. who is going to the temple must not return, or (whilst journeying) on the way (stop to) split wood.

CHAPTER II. THE LEGISLATION OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

§. 33. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The manifest and proveable dependence of Roman thought upon Greek teaching, as far as Philosophy was concerned, induced us, as I stated in §. 22, to discuss Greek and Roman philosophy, as it were, in a parallel order, i. e. without making any distinctive line of separation between the one and the other. But, Roman Jurisprudence was very far from standing in any similar imitative nexus with the legislative principles and enactments of the various States of Greece, nor are the reasons of this phenomenon and fact, I ween, difficult to be seen into even by one who, like myself, has only a very general acquaintance with juridical matters. Might we not, for instance, argue in something like the following fashion on this point? As the English of the modern world, so the ancient Romans lived a *great law-life* in spirit and in endeavor, a life of vigorous, continuous, progressive national and political self-development unto which a peculiar and native Jurisprudence was not only *natural*, inasmuch as all public and free political existence, itself the growth of a firm and practical national character, could not fail to lead on to the framing of national laws, but also *necessary*, inasmuch as, where military inclination, activity, ambition produced a gradually successive encrease of territory, power, wealth, there strong and clear laws, born with and out of the specific circumstances and the relative changes, became requisite to connect and cement the manifold elements and appurtenances of the vast dominion. Thence, too, Roman Jurisprudence, as far as I am able to discern, presents itself to us as a *totality*, i. e. as a gradual development with gradual

modifications, from the age of the Kings through the period of the Republic up to the time of the Caesars. Thence, likewise, most, if not all, of the civilized peoples of the modern world would seem ever to have looked back, and still partially to look back, to the Roman Civilians as the chief masters in whatsoever pertains to the idea and form of Policy and the State, institutions and order, government and rule, monarchical and dictatorial, or parliamentary and municipal. — In Greece, on the contrary, we have to deal with several legislative systems, each created at some peculiar season, each adapted to some peculiar State, and each, consequently, more or less essentially different from the other, so that we must distinguish carefully between what was, or would seem to have been, law in the heroic ages and in the philosophic times, between the laws of Athens, Sparta, Thebes, between even what existed as actual law and what was only Utopianly proposed; and I know not, whether, despite a Solon and a Lycurgos, we Moderns are wont to attach anything like that value to the remnants of the legislations of the various Grecian States which we feel ourselves called upon to attach to what the ancient Greeks have by force of purely intellectual reasoning and speculation, and of enthusiastic and impassioned sensuousness, revealed and embodied, prescribed and practised as Philosophy and Art, as abstract Science and plastic Beauty.

But — having stated thus much in general, and coming to the topic of our special enquiry — what I do know is this: the legislations of the sundry Greek Cities and Tribes differ in a certain respect and up to a certain point very materially from Roman legislature as regards suicide, and this difference in and by itself would warrant our discussing *quite separately* the two. If, namely, suicide be drawn at all within the circle of (penal) jurisprudence, it can be dealt with in two ways only, viz. either *ritually*, i. e. in reference to (ignominious) burial, or *fiscally*, i. e. in reference to (the confiscation of) property. Whereas, now, the laws of the Greeks, whether real, i. e. practically acted upon, or ideal, i. e. put forth as speculative theorems, never, as far as we are aware, meddled with the property of the deceased, but confined themselves solely to the rites of burial, those of the Romans, on the contrary, assumed, as I hope to be able to show, as far as they interfered at all, more especially a fiscal character; at least, whilst some few scattered, early and late, vestiges of the non-burial, or, the ignominious burial,

of suicides have appeared to me too indistinct and questionable to warrant any sure inference touching either juridical fixation or actual usage, it is impossible to deny the fact that sundry Emperors did reap, in some particular and definable cases, pecuniary advantage, on governmental principle, from the voluntary death of their Roman subjects. But this is anticipating: careful enquiry alone can yield the certainty we wish for and aim at.

§. 34. THE GREEKS.

I. In the heroic ages.

It is somewhat curious that already in the events of the Trojan war a sort of funereal prescription or custom touching suicide should present itself to our notice. The elder Philostratos, in his capacity of mythographer, after having recorded the life, exploits, and voluntary death of Ajas Telamonius, proceeds as follows.¹⁾ „The Athenians exposed the corpse, and Menestheus delivered an oration over it, since it was the custom at Athens thus to honor those who have fallen in war. On this occasion, Protesilaos mentions an honorable action on the part of Odysseus. When the corpse was exposed, he brought forward the arms of Achilleus, and said with tears: take with thee into the grave what thou hast wished for, and enjoy the victory thereover, and no longer cherish wrath. The Achaeans lauded Odysseus for this; also Teukros praised him; but he declined the arms, because they, as being the cause of death, were not a fit gift to be put into the grave. At the funeral, they laid the body into the earth, Kalchus declaring that *it was not permitted to deliver over to the flames those who had killed themselves*“ (ἔθαψαν δὲ αὐτὸν καθαδέμενα ἐς τὴν γῆν τὸ σῶμα, ἐξηγουμένου Κάλχαντος ὡς οὐχ ὅσιον εὐρί θάπτεσθαι οἱ ἑαυτοὺς ἀποκτείναντες). This is most certainly a strange piece of intelligence on which sundry remarks would seem to me more or less necessary.

1. We should have to account in some manner for the notion therein embodied, even if we were to incline to reject the interdiction itself as a mere fiction of comparatively late mythography; for the elder Philostratos lived in the second cent. of our era. The double inference to be drawn from the statement as such is, of course,

¹⁾ Heroica, cap. XI, 3.

that already at the time of the Trojan war both *interment* and *burning* of the human corpse were customary among the Greeks, and that the latter was considered more honorable, solemn, sacred than the former for which last mentioned circumstance some reason would have to be assigned. Previously, however, one general observation. Becker has affixed to the ninth of his „pictures of ancient Greek customs“, called das Testament, an excursus extending over sixty long pages¹⁾ in which he treats of the funereal rites of the ancient Greeks. From this same excursus, now, we learn that, though many eminent scholars have entertained the most contradictory opinions on the subject, among the Greeks in all ages both burning and interment were customary, generally, perhaps, the one and the other together, i. e. the partial burning of the corpse first, and then the interment of the bones and ashes, though, perhaps, at some periods the one or the other of these two modes *alone* was more universal or more honorable. But to return to the passage at issue. Here two suppositions seem possible, though I cannot bring myself to set much value upon either of them. Consulting the note of Olearius on our passage in his edition of the works of the two Philostrati, and comparing with it our own author's description of the purification of Lemnos in these same Heroica,²⁾ we find insinuated something to the effect that fire was regarded as a *pure* element — this seems an Eastern notion; let us think of e. g. ancient Persia³⁾ and ancient India —, in which case, then, if a suicidal corpse as such were regarded as impure, it would have been imagined to *sully* the said element by being brought into contact with it. Or, fire was regarded as a *purifying* element of which the suicidal corpse, if suicide were viewed as a great crime, might have been deemed *unworthy*. Thus, for instance, Potter,⁴⁾ quoting Eusthatus as his authority, says that, after the departure of the soul, the body as such was considered impure, and that fire was used as a means of purification in order that the soul, thereby liberated from the coarse and heavy corporeal matter, might the more unrestrictedly and freely soar aloft to the celestial dwellings: which conception in and by

¹⁾ Charities, 1840, Th. II, pp. 166—210. ²⁾ S. I, p. 127 in Jacobs' Uebersetzung. ³⁾ I mean, of course, the mere notion of the sanctity of fire in connexion with the worship of e. g. the Sun, not the application of fire in funeral rites; for we know that the ancient Persians did not burn the corpses, but abandoned them to the wild beasts and birds of prey. Cf. also Lev. X, 1, 2. ⁴⁾ Vide Rambach's Uebersetzung, Th. II, p. 413

itself we might, perhaps, connect with the mythos of Herakles, or, rather vice versâ the latter with it, this heros having purified himself by fire from the dross of earthiness, ere he was received into Olympos; but we must not forget that this very process of his involved an *act of suicide*: which hint leads us to a second enquiry.

2. Is Philostratos' information valid as a legal authority? Even Hermann (as quoted in §. 18), not to speak of earlier writers, receives it as such; but I cannot, for some such reasons as the following. a. We may remember (vide §. 13) that Sophokles who flourished half a dozen centuries earlier than Philostratos, has made the death of Ajas the subject of a tragedy, in which he, as a matter of course, likewise discusses what immediately followed upon his death, viz. the treatment of his corpse. It is true, now, that he in this drama lets Menelaos and Agamemnon *refuse* burial to Ajas (1037 sqq.); but, on the one hand, this refusal itself was entirely independent of the mode of his death, inasmuch as it was based solely upon the design which Ajas had entertained against their joint lives; and, on the other hand, Ajas' brother, Teukros, and Odysseus, in covenant with the chorus, actually *execute* the burial of our suicidal hero. And, though as a mere literary anecdote, not for any purpose of argument or demonstration, I will here incidentally state that the continuer of the Iliad, generally called Quintus Calaber, and supposed to have lived about three centuries later than the elder Philostratos, expressly lets the corpse of Ajas *be even burnt*.¹⁾ Similarly, as a mere literary anecdote, if you like, but not quite irrelevant is the tradition, among various others, that Kalchus himself who as soothsayer enacts so influential a part in the Iliad already, died *suicidally*.²⁾ b. There is, I believe, no proof that in the *earliest* ages of Greece any ritual infamy was visited upon suicides; or, if there were, would, for instance, Euripides — who, we may assume, intended to represent faithfully the customs of yon early age to which his theme appertained — let Orestes, whilst in Argos before Agamemnon's palace, when he is about to slay himself along with his sister Elektra, expressly say³⁾ to Pylades, as if it followed

¹⁾ Praetermissorum ab Homero libb. XIV, edid. de Pauw, 1734, lib. V, 635 sqq. the four lines ἤλθε δὲ πνοῇ — ἐπειγομένοι ἀνέμοιο. ²⁾ Vide Smith's Classical Dictionary s. v. Calchus. — I will here, by the way, state that Falret (p. 57) lets the grammarian Servius (vide §. 17) poison himself on account of gouty pains; but I know not upon what authority. ³⁾ Orestes, lines 1057 and 1058.

as a matter of course, that it *might* be done: „have due care for our corpses, when we are gone, inter us together near our father's tomb.“ And, at any rate, there are innumerable ancient testimonies on record, to which we have already (§§. 13, 26) more than once alluded, that the Greeks of ancient days attached anything but ignominy to the particular suicide of Ajas.

II. At Thebes.

Zenobius, a sophist of the 2nd cent. p. C., composed an epitome of the Proverbs of Lucil. Tarrhaeus and Didymus Alexandrinus in alphabetical order; and in this work we are informed, Aristotle being likewise quoted as a voucher for the certainty of the fact, that suicides did not come in for *any* honor, i. e. were branded with some degree of infamy, which latter we must suppose to have consisted in exclusion from the customary funereal solemnities, of whatsoever kind these may have been.¹⁾ But we will let the passage in its original text tell its own tale. The Hellenic proverb put forward for explanation is: τί οὐκ ἀπήγξω, ἵνα Θήβησιν ἥρωος γένῃ; — and the source from which it was extracted is, or would seem to be, a lost comedy of the ancient Attic dramatist Platon's: ταύτης Πλάτων ἐν Μανελῶν μέμνη. The following explanation is then given: φασὶ δὲ, ὅτε ἐν Θήβαις οἱ ἑαυτοὺς ἀναιροῦντες, οὐδὲ μιᾶς τιμῆς μετεῖχον. καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ φησὶ περὶ Θηβαίων τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι τοὺς αὐτόχειρας ἑαυτῶν γινόμενους οὐκ ἐτίμων. τὸ οὖν, Ἴνα ἥρωος γένῃ, κατ' εὐφημισμὸν εἰρηγται, i. e. used *ironically*, as the context warrants us in translating. — As far as I am aware, this testimony of Aristotle is not to be met with in any extant work of his; perhaps, it stood originally in his „Politics“, where we are treated to numerous scraps of ancient legislation; but it certainly is not to be found among such fragments of that work as have reached us. Though, however, this piece of information be meagre in the extreme, and only incidental, as it were, I know of no reason which could warrant us in considering it of dubious authority. But, methinks, those writers who would fain discover in a passage we are about to quote any further information on the anti-suicidal legislation of the city under mention, tread upon even less than merely debateable ground. I have already (§. 17) alluded to the epic of the Roman poet Statius, only bits

¹⁾ Adagia sive Proverbia Graecorum, &c., centuria VI, prov. 17, in Schott's edit. 1612, pp. 157, 158.

of which, however, I have read. It treats of the war of the seven kings against Thebes, an event which is supposed to have taken place in the 13th cent. a. C., and is said to have been besung by the early Greek poet Antimachus, whose poem, now lost, supplied Statius with materials. Here, now, ¹⁾ the usurper Eteocles forbids, or, is made to forbid, the burning, or peaceful interment, of the suicidal prophet Maeon:

„vetat igne rapi, pacemque sepulcri
Impius ignaris nequidquam manibus arcet.“

To which lines sundry writers have ascribed something like the force of proof, e. g. Kirchmann ²⁾ appears to see in them, as also in the previously adduced passage from Philostratos, a sort of evidence to the effect „Graecos τοὺς αὐτόχθονας non combussisse.“ But Statius, even supposing so late a writer and a mere poet to be any historical authority on a legal question, represents this decree not only as an injustice, but also evidently as the mere effect of Eteocles' displeasure at the prophet's previous denunciation of him, consequently, as the arbitrary command of vindictive tyranny, and in no wise as the natural or lawful punishment awarded to self-inflicted death as such. More wisely, therefore, as I take it, than Kirchmann the learned commentator on our poem, Caspar Barth, judges, when he says. ³⁾ „Moris vero olim erat, ut qui se ipsos interficerent, sepultura prohiberentur. Quod ad istius tamen Regis Impietatem non pertinet.“ At all events, however, Falret (ubi supra, p. 197) must have hazarded the statement that at Thebes the corpses of suicides were ignominiously cast into the flames, because one hastened to withdraw them, as impure objects, from the sight of men!! — utterly at random.

III. At Athens.

When legislating ideally on suicide for his Utopian State, and laboring to mark legislatively his indignation at, and abhorrence of, what he conceived to be criminal suicide (§. 25), Plato does not deny burial to suicides, but merely modifies their interment so that their graves should be devoid of monument or epitaph, in some solitary, remote spot. But we will quote in partial version his own mystically gloomy words. ⁴⁾ „What ought to be appointed as re-

¹⁾ Theb. III, 97, 98, and vide also lines 110, 111. ²⁾ De funeribus Romanorum, edit. 3, 1661, lib. I, c. 3, p. 23. ³⁾ Animadversiones ad Thebatdem, 1664, vol. II, p. 700. ⁴⁾ De legibus lib. IX, edid. Ast, T. I, p. 358.

gards propitiations and sepulture of such (i. e. of those suicides who must, according to his own very exceptive and exceptionable theory, be regarded as criminal), the Divinity knows; but the nearest relatives of the deceased are to consult the interpreters of the Gods, and the existing laws on the subject. τάφους (thus the original continues) δ' εἶναι τοῖς οὕτω φθαρείσι πρῶτον μὲν κατὰ μόνας μηδέ μεθ' ἑνὸς ξυντάφου, εἶτα ἐν τοῖς τῶν δώδεκα ὁρίοις μερῶν τῶν, ὅσα ἀργὰ καὶ ἀνώνυμα, θάπτειν ἀκλεεῖς αὐτοῦς, μήτε στήλαις μήτε ὀνόμασι δηλοῦντας τοὺς τάφους.“

A few simple remarks on this passage may not be altogether unseasonable. As to the καθαρμοὶ (purgationes, expiationes; etiam prima pars initiationis, τελεταί, Mysteries), we are, I presume, to understand by them a species of paganico-catholic purgatory-nostrum, performed on earth, and designed to absolve the dead from the ills in a future life (cf. his own de Republ. lib. II, c. 5, and lib. V, c. 15). — „The Divinity knows“.... „consult the interpreters of the Gods.“ This may be very pious; but whether it be also strong-minded or judicious? The Delphic priesthood, no doubt, is more especially meant (cf. his de Rep. lib. IV, p. 179 in Bekker's edit.). Yet, suchlike matters are important and essential elements in the realization of Plato's philosophical Utopia; and might it not be pronounced a weak accommodation to popular prejudice and superstition, when our legislator suddenly refers us wholly concerning *them* to Gods, Oracles, Priests? For, we are then fairly led off into a veritably cloud-capped Utopia, and needlessly too, since prophets and soothsayers may reasonably be left aside, when and where such political and moral problems are to be solved as Reason alone can, and ought to, solve. — The territory of his imaginary Republic was, like that of Attica itself, divided into twelve districts (vide Leges, lib. V.). This in general. More specifically it will concern us to state what follows. It is palpably erroneous, when Giphanius, as quoted in §. 26, says that Plato ordered that suicides should not be buried; and it seems to me well nigh as wrong, when Prof. Teuffel¹⁾ refers us to this passage as representing actually existent Greek law: „und keine Inschrift auf ihrem Grabe pflanzte ihr Ge-

¹⁾ In Boulay's Real-Encyclopædie B. VI, 1852, the very brief art. s. v. suicidium, based, as, indeed, the learned author himself hints, almost entirely upon Hermann's already (§. 18) quoted lengthier critical notice.

βάσιν fort" u. s. w. Ought he not to have expressed himself rather thus: sollte nach Plato fortpflanzen?

If, however, we might not unreasonably suppose that Plato was likely to intend in this passage rather to add to than to diminish the severity of the really existent Athenian laws on the subject of suicide, we are, nevertheless, all but forced by other testimonies to conclude that the actual laws of Athens in Plato's time inflicted a still severer punishment, viz. absolute *non-burial*. Διὸ καὶ ἡ πόλις ζημοῖ· καὶ τις ἀτιμία πρόσσεται τῷ ἑαυτὸν διαφθεύσαντι, ὥς τὴν πόλιν ἀδικοῦντι. These are the exact words of Aristotle in a passage of his Nicomachean Ethics the *ethical* elements of which we discussed in §. 26; and they have evidently a *legal* bearing. Since, however, the Stagirite himself does not enter into particulars, we, of course, fail to learn at first hand what species of punishment was decreed by the Law, and inflicted by the State; and, if no ancient commentator had proffered his aid in the matter, I myself, at least, should have without any hesitation taken for granted that the law mentioned by Aeschines to which we alluded already in §. 9, and which we shall by and by specify and discuss, was here meant by our philosopher. But, as we have hinted, a paraphrast and a scholiast have said their say on this matter. The former, Andronicus Rhodus, a Roman peripatetic in the 1st cent. p. C., explains in his Greek periphrasis of the Nicomachean Ethics the passage before us as follows.¹⁾ „Ac propterea civitas, tanquam ad se spectet injuria, poenas ab eo exigit, eumque ulciscitur, ut potest. *Neque enim corpus sepulturae tradi permittit*“ (οὐ γὰρ ἐὰν θάπτειν τὸ σῶμα). The latter (Schol. Par.) quoted by Zell,²⁾ gives the very indefinite and therefore altogether unsatisfactory explanation: ἐὰν γὰρ ἄταφον ἢ ἄλλως τιμωρεῖται. If, however, we would examine into these comments fairly and fully, we must, I presume, revert to yon Athenian law, the nexus and substance of which have been given, for a merely etymological purpose, in §. 9. It runs verbatim thus: καὶ ἐάν τις αὐτὸν διαχρήσῃται, τὴν χεῖρα τὴν τοῦτο πράξασαν χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος θάπτομεν. The author of which law was, we may assume, Drako, the proverbially severe Athenian legislator in the 7th cent. a. C. At all events,³⁾ of *Draconic origin* was such part of it as bears upon inanimate things,

¹⁾ Edited with a Latin version by Daniel Heinsius, 1679, *ibid.* pag. 244.

²⁾ In his edit. of the *ethica Nicom.*, vol. II, p. 198. ³⁾ Vide Suidas s. v. Nikon, p. 260 in Gaisford's edit.

i. e. the precept of penal procedure even against aught lifeless that had accidentally caused the death of a human being, a legal measure which was manifestly intended to inspire into the human mind and heart a deep reverence for the sanctity of human life, and the utmost abhorrence of homicide, and may incidentally add that, whenever and wheresoever a people is wanting in earnestness or cautiousness, a similar law has been promulgated, e. g. as among the ancient Hebrews,¹⁾ so among the modern English.²⁾ The great idea of the dignity of man is the veritable spirit which quickens and raises the total inhold and purport of even suchlike apparently exaggerated and seemingly unwarrantable legal enactments. But to return. Inasmuch as Plutarch, furthermore, expressly testifies³⁾ that Solon abrogated all the laws of Draco, *those only excepted which related to murder*, we may reasonably conclude, or suggest, that the laws relating to suicide were regarded as also belonging to the latter; for in every legislative system, if they occur at all, they are invariably placed in the category of homicide. At all events, no Greek author I have perused or consulted mentions, as having been originated by Solon, the anti-suicidal law under discussion, or any anti-suicidal law whatsoever. Only *indirectly* or *mediately*, therefore, as I take it, can Ast⁴⁾ speak of the said law as „*lex Solonia*.“ Did, however, this same law *prohibit burial*? No! All that is therein prescribed amounts only to this: that the hand is to be buried *apart from the body*, but *yet buried*, only not in the same grave. At least, thus I understand this passage, as most others too have done. Josephus was, doubtless, alluding to this law, when he, in his erudite harangue against suicide,⁵⁾ informed his Jewish audience that „the laws of other (i. e. non-jewish) nations also prescribe that the *right* hands (τὰς δεξιὰς) of suicides shall be cut off, because they have been employed for self-destruction, as members which had, as it were, estranged themselves from the body.“ And, the (right) hand, as the presumptive principal agent or guilty instrument was deemed unworthy of further connexion with the remainder of the body, and was, therefore, doomed to be buried apart

¹⁾ Vide Exod. XXI, 28, 29, and cf. Gen. IX, 5, 6 with what we shall say on this latter passage in §. 47. ²⁾ I allude, of course, to what we call somewhat strangely, though not unmeaningly, if we go back to the origin of the matter, the law of „*Deodand*.“ ³⁾ *Vita Solonis*, c. 17. ⁴⁾ In his edit. of Plato de legibus, T. II, p. 460. ⁵⁾ De bello Jud. lib. III, c. 8. §. 5.

from it; but — yet it was buried; and, if it received actual burial, we cannot but infer that a fortiori the remaining portion of the corpse had an equal amount of care or honor bestowed upon it. We, therefore, without hesitation reject Tzschirner's interpretation (p. 134 of the work mentioned in §. 15) of *χωρίς* who understood it to mean without, i. e. the hand only was buried, but the body left unburied, and agree with a much earlier writer¹⁾ who paraphrases it by „seorsim a corpore, non eodem tumulo.“ So likewise Becker (*Charicles*, p. 207) expressly adds: „aber der Leichnam wurde begraben.“

Nothing more than a mere unproved assertion, finally, seems to me what L. G. Gyraldus²⁾ states in the following words. „*Lex Atheniensium fuit haec: αὐτόχτισ ἀταφος ἔστω non solum αὐτόχτιστες apud Graecos sepulturae honoribus excidebant, sed*“ &c. But, where are the above Greek words to be found? Were it not at all times worse than useless to refine upon any affirmation the *general* verity of which has yet to be substantiated, i. e. to try to explain as fact what is, after all, not a fact, I would enter more fully here upon what Rambach³⁾ restrictively annotates to the effect that *θάπτειν* is sometimes employed in the sense of to bury solemnly, not only in that of to bury in general, and that *ἄταφος* would refer, therefore, only to a *quiet* burial, the opposite of being *burnt* publicly, &c. But, this is most assuredly not true: *θάπτειν* is the quite general word for burial (like e. g. the Latin *sepelire*), in whatever manner the funeral was performed, *καίειν* being then = the Latin *cremare*, the specific term for burning, and *κατορύττειν* = the Latin *humare* (*humus* = *terra*, cf. our „*inter*“ = *in terram*) the specific term for putting into the earth. Even, however, if we were, for argument's sake, to admit the full force of Rambach's limitation: what should we gain on historical grounds? Diogenes Laertius, for instance, narrates to us any given number of suicidal deaths on the part of philosophers who lived, taught, died at Athens during the half dozen centuries which immediately preceded our era, and, consequently, likewise in the times of Aeschines, Aristoteles, &c., and two of those very persons against whom Aeschines' extant philippics are directed, died by their own hands, viz. Timarchus by self-

¹⁾ Petitus, commentarius in leges Atticas, 1635, c. 30, p. 523. ²⁾ Diss. de sepultura ac vario sepeliendi ritu libellus, c. XI, in T. I, pp. 751, 752 of his opera omnia, 1696. ³⁾ Vide his German transl. of Potter's Archaeology T. II, p. 351, Anmerk.

suspension, because he knew not how to defend himself against the accusations brought forward, and Demosthenes by self-poisoning under the circumstances I have mentioned in §. 30. Nevertheless, on no one occasion is it even so much as hinted to us that any individual among the said numerous suicides had either not been buried at all, or had been buried with any restricted measure of solemnity. Far earlier Greek general historians, earlier, I mean, than Diogenes Laertius, are equally silent on this subject, and their unanimous silence would seem to me to tell the very same tale, viz. that nothing of the kind really occurred. *Positive* evidence, however, is not known to me, unless we might be allowed to leap, for instance, into the 2nd cent. p. C. Lucian, after having informed us that Demonax starved himself to death at Athens (cf. §. 28), gives the following minute account of his funeral (ibid. pp. 242, 243). „Shortly before his death, somebody asked him: what he prescribed in regard to his funeral? His answer was: do not trouble yourselves about that, the smell will inter me. And, when the former replied: how? would it not be disgraceful if the corpse of such a man should lie as food for birds and dogs? he responded: I see nothing unseemly therein, if I, when dead, should be likewise useful to some living beings. But the Athenians did not let it come to that: they interred him with a pompous public funeral (ἑθαψαν αὐτὸν δημοσίᾳ μεγαλοπρεπῶς), and mourned a long time for him.... All Athenians without exception appeared at his funeral, and the philosophers carried his bier.“ And was this same Lucian aware that it had ever been otherwise at Athens, where he himself for a long time resided, when he concludes his panegyric on Demosthenes by letting Antipater say what follows. „I call that an invincible soul which one may with truth term blessed! How worthy of a valiant and cautious republican to carry the surest pledge of his liberty always about him! He has now gone in order to begin a new life in the islands of the Blessed where the Heroes are said to dwell; or, has trodden the paths on which, it is believed, the souls raise themselves to heaven, and is as daemon in the train of Jupiter Eleutherius. His corpse, however, we will send to Athens, and make the *Attic earth* a present of it which is still more precious than the bones of those who fell at Marathon.“ I have extracted this entire passage, because it, additionally to what was adduced in §. 28, throws light upon Lucian's own view of suicide.

Therefore, though it may appear something like an abuse of the privilege of skepticism, I cannot help conjecturing that Andronicus Rhodus was *mistaken*; nor have I been able to discover in the testimonies of ancient historians any corroboration of the legal practice specified by Aeschines, and alluded to by Aristoteles. — Even Becker's hint (*Charitæ*, II, p. 218) that, perhaps, suicides were buried quietly, in which case burning would necessarily be omitted, or, even by night, I have not found borne out by aught that has come to my knowledge.

Before, however, quitting Athens, we would fain likewise notice a very peculiar phenomenon mentioned and discussed by Libanius, the cotemporary of Julian the Apostate (*vide* the previous chapter). In the Declamations of this Greek rhetorician there is apparently no end of cases in which persons, feeling unhappy and weary of life, present themselves before the *Areopagus*, yon Athenian tribunal presumptively of Cecropic origin, but re-organized by Solon, and solicit, sometimes successfully, and sometimes in vain, permission to kill themselves. For instance,¹⁾ a man wishes to be free from a loquacious wife; or, a parasite is tired of life, because his patron, having applied himself to philosophy, gives fewer dinners; or, Timon, the misanthrope, wishes to die, because he cannot, in spite of his vow to hate all men, help loving Alcibiades; or, Demosthenes, the orator, demands, after five days' deliberation, hemlock; or, an envious man wishes to be liberated from the pain of beholding his neighbour's wealth; or, a miser presents himself with a petition that the license to kill himself might be granted, because the law obliges him to give up, very much against his inclination, some money he had found; or, finally, an orator would fain die, because his death would satisfy and appease the enemy who is besieging and starving out the town.

As regards all these same Declamations specifically, *internal evidence* alone, i. e. the extreme frivolousness and ludicrousness of most of the pleas, and the historically baseless introduction of real persons, e. g. Timon and Demosthenes, would seem to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that Libanius is introducing to us fictions, not facts, that he is indulging his oratorical and dialectical powers

¹⁾ The following examples are taken successively from Declamations VI, XI, IX, XIII, VIII, X, XII.

in mere sophistic fashion on purely imaginary topics. Nor does Libanius stand alone with suchlike productions in later Greek literature; for instance, Lucian also has written three more or less clever and entertaining performances of this sort (vide §. 13) and Dio Chrysostomos several dozen (vide §. 27). Likewise in Roman literature they occur from the pen of the elder Seneca and from that of Quintilian (vide the next §), and as Libanius does, so Dio Chrysostomos, the elder Seneca and Quintilian touch upon our subject, and will, therefore, have to come in the sequel before us. Without wishing or meaning here to anticipate what must be said in its proper place and in due season, we might, however, as well now say a few words on this class of testimonies in general with regard to Greek or Roman legislation on the subject of suicide, i. e. on the only subject we are called upon to take notice of.

As far as I have been able to learn, such scholars as turned their attention to classical jurisprudence in e. g. the 17th and 18th centuries had, speaking in general, no hesitation or misgivings about using the said Declamations or kindred writings as genuine sources of authentic law. This was a fallacy, however, which belonged to the spirit and fashion of the age, and which, though some of the elder lawyers themselves would seem to have put their veto upon it, would appear not to have become entirely exploded even in the present day. Of course, since I am no lawyer, I must be understood as relying for this piece of intelligence, in its general references, upon what I have found stated in such writings of e. g. Wächter's, Falck's &c. as I shall have to mention by and by. But one need not be a lawyer to investigate what in this matter concerns *our particular subject*. Common sense and varied reading are for this latter purpose quite sufficient.

The elder de Meurs (Meursius), a very erudite and otherwise unprejudiced man, commences one of the chapters of his celebrated treatise on Athenian legislation with the following words.¹⁾ „Insuper, licebat quoque se occidere, impetrata a magistratu potestate“ —; and on the immediately following page he remarks more analytically thus. „Et observa ipsa illic legis verba. Oportebat vero exponere causas, ob quas mori vellet: nempe, aut mutilatum corpus, aut majorem medicina morbum aliquem, aut orbitatem, aut jacturam facul-

¹⁾ Themis Attica sive de legibus Atticis, lib. I, c. 10, p. 51 of edit. 1685.

tatum: quae res vitam acerbam reddebant.“ And the examples he adduces in *proof* of this strange assertion consist solely in passages from these very Declamations of Libanius which same passages he unhesitatingly places, as far as legislative force and historical verity are concerned, *on a par* with that passage in Aeschines which we have already notified and commented on. We find, according to Meursius' own Latin version, the hero of Decl. VIII quoting the established law as speaking: „Utilissimam super his omnibus legem scripsit, quam nunc adjutricem habens huc veni. Quisquis es, inquit, cui vita gravis est, morere. malis immergeris, bibe cicutam. aerumnis opprimeris, abi, et morere. recitet miser aerumnas suas, et remedium det senatus, ac solvatur morte moeror“; — and the Senate saying to the hero of Decl. X: „Ostende mutilatum corpus, aut morbum aliquem incurabilem, aut amissos liberos, aut facultates“; — or, finally, the hero of Decl. XII delivering himself to the following effect: „Suaderem tamen, ut sinerent me beneficio legis uti, quae sic dicit. Qui vivere nolit, magistratui indicato: gratiaque impetrata, vita excedito.“ And, late in this our 19th century, we still find Stäudlin (p. 26 of the work quoted in the Preface) believing in the existence of such an Areopagite measure and custom. Credulously, however, as I cannot help concluding from everything that has become clear to me on this matter, viz. for the following easily come-at-able reasons.

1. What I have already stated about the excessively fantastic and puerile character of all the individual cases themselves which Libanius has marshalled forth, and the proveably unhistorical and impossible nature of some of them.

2. The general tenor and tone of such ancient rhetorical exercises as I have above alluded to. They were models, elaborated by the teachers and lecturers for the instruction of their pupils or the amusement of their audiences, and the only thing aimed at by them was to show the dexterous and pertinent application of every imaginable subtlety and trick in argument, and of every conceivable figure and turn in diction. And to effect this, real cases as regards the examples introduced were just as little requisite or expected as the utterance of sincere convictions on the part of the rhetoricians themselves. Also this latter point I will illustrate, without departing from our immediate theme. Towards the end of one of his rhetorical exercises, Lucian lets the hero who is defending himself, say: „he (the tyrant) died the most miserable of all deaths,

by his own hand, which thing is an incomparably harder lot than to die by the hand of another!⁴ We know that he was very far from really thinking so; we know, too, that the spirit of his age was equally far from subscribing to such a dictum.

3. Which last casual remark may lead us on to affirm that we must not even believe or fancy that the contents of such rhetorical exercises was, at least, of such sort that it did not clash with the antique and cotemporary notions of what was veritable and probable, or, just and wise. On the contrary, what was purely invented and utterly baseless — might not only supply the fittest material for trifling with, but also afford the amplest scope for the display of ingenuity — in something like the later scholastic or rabbinical fashion.

4. The Areopagus, now, as the reader is aware, had from time immemorial exercised jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to homicide, but had, in the days of Libanius, long ago already ceased to exist at all, except in the mere remembrance of the Greeks, so that our author might, as it were, with impunity father upon it all sorts of mythical fictions.

5. No ancient Greek writer makes any mention whatsoever of the legal institute under mention; but in one of the Greek colonies, viz. Massalia, as we shall by and by show, a practice similar to that which Libanius ascribes to the Areopagus really had obtained and been prevalent; and, moreover, the Latin writer Quintilian had, in his capacity of rhetorician, ascribed the identical function and practice a couple of centuries before Libanius to the *Roman Senate*: with equal gratuitousness (vide §. 36); but such antecedents might, at all events, suggest the theme to Libanius, and even save him the trouble of original invention.

IV. In Sparta.

The reader of Homer may remember that already in the *Odyssey*¹⁾ Minos ὁ νομοθέτης is represented as holding communion with Zeus, and deriving his legislative wisdom from a divine source; and a similar reference of political law to religious revealings continued to be made and credited for a long time both in Greek and in Roman antiquity: thus, for instance, Numa ascribed his prescriptions and enactments to the nymph Egeria,²⁾ Zaleukos referred his legis-

¹⁾ Rhaps. XIX, 178. ²⁾ Dionysius Hal. de antiq. Rom. lib. II, c. 61.

lation to Pallas,¹⁾ and Lykurgos assigned his laws to the Delphic Apollo.²⁾ Similarly (vide Sections II and IV), among the Eastern peoples, e. g. Menu received his laws from Brahma, Zoroaster his from Ormuzd, and — Moses his from Jehovah. As regards, now, those early periods of classical antiquity, we must, of course, make the needful deductions not only for the simple piety, but also for the priestly trickiness apparent in suchlike pretensions or pretences; nevertheless, there was some show of human verity about them. For, the said Nomothetai were unquestionably most earnest, valiant, and devout men of their kind, and their Nomoi, very unlike much in the equivocal and variable statutes of many of our modern book-taught, temporizing and expedient law-makers, embraced and decided the entire political and ethical life of their respective peoples. When we, for instance, read that Charondas, the legislator of Thurii, and Diokles, the legislator of the Syracusans, having decreed that it should be a capital crime to enter a popular assembly armed, and that each of them, having incautiously done so, forthwith slew himself, lest in his own person the law given might appear to have been violated with impunity, we may disbelieve such stories as mere fables;³⁾ but, their very existence would still with almost equal force prove at least the popular faith in the earnestness of soul and the vigor of purpose which inspired and actuated those ancient legislators.

In a kindred spirit, now, we must, I presume, regard and receive also the story of Lykurgos' death, whether self-inflicted, as e. g. Tertullian⁴⁾ affirms, from grief, because the Lacedaemonians had amended his laws, or self-inflicted, as e. g. Plutarch⁵⁾ states (vide §. 31), in order that inviolate continuance might be ensured to them. Though, namely, the entire narrative about Lykurgos' person and efficacy — say, in the 9th cent. a. C. — plays strongly over into the mythical, and Plutarch, himself, otherwise credulous enough, draws attention⁶⁾ to the extreme *doubtfulness* of, among other things, also his *death*, which, therefore, other ancient historians, e. g. Justinus,⁶⁾ have declared to have been natural, yet the strength of character which is indubitably impressed upon his Spartan code would warrant us in giving partial belief to some such determinedness on the part of its

¹⁾ Diod. Sik. XII, 19. ²⁾ Ibid. XIII, 33. ³⁾ Cf. e. g. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. 44, notes 16 and 17. ⁴⁾ *Apologet. adv. gentes*, c. 4 and c. 46. ⁵⁾ *Life of Lycurgus*, c. 1. ⁶⁾ *Hist. philippicae*, lib. III, c. 3.

originator. In which case, then, we might justly consider his self-starvation as a species of patriotic *self-devotion*, albeit we could not but admit that it would argue both cruel tyranny and foolish vanity, had Lykurgos really wished and tried to compel and doom his people to conserve, though time must roll on and mankind progress, unaltered, unmodified a system of laws in which there were most unquestionably very many elements equally contrary to reason, culture, the dignity and destiny of man. More wisely, Solon claimed for his laws only a century's validity.¹⁾

The very existence, however, of the above mentioned narrative of Lykurgos' own manner of death would seem to furnish us with a sort of incidental proof that, at all events, no *anti-suicidal* item was contained in his Spartan laws; and, indeed, no intelligent and reflecting person can remember (vide in Plutarch's life chapters 16, 21, 28) e. g. the assassin-hunt (*Kryptia*) upon the poor Helots, the exposure of delicate children, and the almost exclusively martial spirit of every feature, without finding it impossible to imagine that suicide could have been therein interdicted, i. e. that any clause could therein have found a place by which individual life as such was declared a treasure too sacred to be despoiled by its possessor's self-wrought violence. Not only are some of the least laudable and excusable features in Plato's Republic, in which suicide is, as we saw in §§. 13 and 25, under given circumstances justified or commended, merely a sort of idealization of some of the weakest or worst elements in the don-quixotism of Spartanism, but the whole tenor of Spartan history would seem to me to testify that to the Spartan as such, man, woman, or youth, suicide at all times presented itself in the light of a welcome and legitimate asylum, whensoever indignity or dishonor, captivity or servitude menaced, on the principle that those who do not value their own lives are the least likely to be subjugated, and, therefore, such as withdrew themselves from subjection to any sort of foreign power by self-inflicted death manifestly appeared to their fellow-citizens to have betrayed praiseworthy love of liberty, patriotic virtue, republican pride.

In the face of this, perhaps, too lengthy preamble, then, the case of a certain Aristodemos which Potter (in his already quoted Greek Archaeology) actually brings forward as a veritable exempli-

¹⁾ Plutarch's life of Solon, c. 25.

fication of Spartan anti-suicidal legislation, can scarcely fail to stagger an attentive reader of Herodotos.¹⁾ In the 5th cent. a. C., Aristodemus, having behaved in a cowardly manner at Thermopylae by endeavoring to save himself from the fate of the three hundred, was branded as a coward; but, subsequently, at Plataea, in order to wipe off the stain, he rushed most violently into certain death. Though, now, the corpses of the others who had been slain in the battle were interred with the usual solemnities, he was not honored with funeral rites (οὐκ ἐτιμήθη), but left unnoticed, because he had *voluntarily sought death* (βουλόμενος ἀποθάνειν). This is the reason Herodotos assigns, albeit he also hints, apparently at least, that such harsh treatment of Aristodemus' corpse and memory must be referred rather to private resentment than to any legal institute. Assuredly, his case did not even amount to one of suicide; and, if our historian was correct with his βουλόμενος ἀποθάνειν, we should, I presume, have to interpret the matter thus: the asceticism and rigorism of Spartanism demanded that the citizen and patriot should fight and devote himself, not with the fury of a desperado or madman, but calmly and deliberately. If, however, we may venture on this occasion to set the old Hæliarnasian's authority aside, an altogether different, and, perhaps, a more probable, reason might be imagined. Aristodemus had proved himself by his down-hearted behaviour and flight at Thermopylae a τρέσας, had rendered himself an ἄτιμος, and according to the unjustly severe spirit of Lykurgism, he having once become so, an indelible brand attached to him which no subsequent conduct or act of his could even lessen, let alone remove, and, if I mistake not, the corpses of all τρέσαντες and ἄτιμοι naturally and necessarily came in for the treatment to which his corpse, according to our ancient Greek historian, was subjected. — The editors of Herodotos have not, as far as they are known to me, bestowed any discussion upon this passage.

Ere we close our remarks on Sparta, it may, finally, not be altogether uninteresting or irrelevant to append those sentiments on suicide which, in the last half of the 3rd cent. a. C., the Spartan King Kleomenes, who had not quite in vain endeavored to revive in Sparta Lycurg's spirit and forms, is said to have uttered,²⁾ and

¹⁾ Lib. VII., 229sq. and lib. IX., 71. ²⁾ Plutarch's life of Kleomenes, c. 31, and c. 36—38. However, Kleomenes had, according to the same historian (c. 2 and c. 11), in his youth received instructions from a celebrated Stoic, Sphaerus by name.

to recount his and his Spartan adherents' subsequent suicidal deaths which Plutarch himself represents as partaking of the character of genuine Lacedaemonism. After Kleomenes had been vanquished at Sellasia by Antigonos, King of Macedon, and was on his flight to Ptolemy in Egypt, whilst tarrying on the island of Aegialia, one of his friends, Therykion, who immediately afterwards, without attempting to answer Kleomenes' arguments, slew himself, endeavored to convince him that, since they had not died on the battle-field, they had best now die that death *which was in point of glory and valor* next to the warrior-death on a field of battle, viz. *self-liberation from the power of Fate*. Whereunto Kleomenes replied about as follows. „How, thou coward? Deemest thou thyself, haply, valorous and courageous, because thou aspirest to death, the easiest thing which is in everybody's power, and dost not consider that thou renderest thyself guilty of a flight which is even far more disgraceful than our present one. Still greater heroes than we are have been obliged to succumb to their foes, either persecuted by Fortune, or overwhelmed by the Multitude. But, whoso desponds over misery and trouble, in consequence of the praise or blame of men, is vanquished by his own effeminacy and weakness. For, a self-chosen death must not be avoidance of certain actions, it must be action itself, inasmuch as nothing is more ignominious than merely to live and to die unto one's self.¹⁾ And, to this thou now summonest us, seeking to free thyself out of the present situation, without thereby effecting aught else good or useful. But, in my opinion, thou, as little as I myself, mayst give up hopes for our country; not until these should abandon us, shall we be able to die, as soon as we like, in the easiest manner.“ — Two or three years later, however, Kleomenes, unworthily treated by the unworthy Ptolemaeus Philopator, and unsuccessful in inciting a revolt against him, died along with his Spartan followers, each by his own hand; nay, even the eldest of his little sons flung himself from a roof, and was indignant at being prevented from ending his life by the fall.

V. In Massalia, or Massilia (the modern Marseilles).

Crossing over from the Continent of ancient Hellas to her Colonies, we will speak first of the above-named city which, most con-

¹⁾ The original of this last passage vide in §. 65, p. 49, where it is given in partial illustration of a Paulinic assertion.

veniently and beautifully situated and possessing a climate as genial as that of Greece herself, was ¹⁾ founded anno 600 a. C. by Phocaeans under the guidance of Simos and Protos, and became since 535 a. C. the abode of numerous citizens of Phocaea who, having fled from their home before the arms of Cyrus, not only enjoyed both political freedom and commercial prosperity here, but even established other colonial towns in Gaul and Spain. — After which brief preliminaries, we quote from Valerius Maximus ²⁾ the following communication. „The government has hemlock in its keeping which is given to whomsoever is able to assign reasons to the six hundred — thus the Senate there is called — which render death desirable to him. The demands which can be made on anybody appear in this manner softened by gentle sympathy, inasmuch as exit out of life is not permitted to everybody who has a fancy for it, whereas, nevertheless, an easy means for the purpose is afforded to those who, after careful consideration, wish to quit the world. In such wise the tried road to an end is opened both unto happiness and unto misfortune; for, unmeasured happiness and misfortune may contain reasons for leaving life: the latter that it may not continue; the former that it may not cease.“

Inasmuch as Val. Max. himself was a decided and even an enthusiastic advocate of suicide, ³⁾ we cannot marvel at his approval of this legal measure in ancient Massalia; indeed, he immoderately extols the institutions of the Massaliotes also in sundry other particulars, and they would really appear to have been in general distinguished by extreme moral strictness and scrupulosity, e. g. they did not tolerate the Roman mimes, and the women were prohibited from drinking aught but water. However, the information he has volunteered about the measure at issue is sadly too incomplete and unsatisfactory to enable us to form any exact estimate of what he himself considers its wisdom and benevolence. For instance, we do not learn, whether the six hundred ever refused the application, dissuaded the petitioner, prevented the deed; or, whether, if the applicant disobeyed the magisterial decree, his corpse was in any manner ignominiously dealt with; or, of what nature those principles were in accordance with which the senatorial decree was given. — The

¹⁾ Justinus, lib. 43, 3—5. ²⁾ Lib. II, c. 6, nr. 7. ³⁾ Vide e. g. ibid. nr. 8; III, 2, 1; V, 8, 3 and 4; IX, 12, nr. 7, and cf. the narratives given in §. 35.

said measure was, we should think, intended to serve two ends: firstly, to prevent motiveless suicide — and this was, doubtless, a good one, —, and, secondly, to remove from motivated suicide the character of a social misdeed — and this must appear to us Christians at all events a somewhat questionable one. We may assume that, if a citizen considered himself to have become really unserviceable to the State (e. g. his faculties having failed through old age or sickness, and he thus unproductively consuming what might be wanted or better used for younger and stronger persons), the difficulty of agreement on the part of six hundred men of antique Greek cast of mind and complexion of feeling would, in all probability, not have been very great; but, at all events, the necessity of the agreement of so large a number of councillors, or, of their representative presiding committee, could scarcely do otherwise than act as a salutary check upon an extravagant abuse of so dangerous a privilege.

But, is the entire statement, for which Valerius Maximus is our *only* authority, *worthy of belief*? A question which various modern writers have answered variously. Voltaire (as quoted in §. 18) says with his wonted witty flippancy and exceedingly cheap scepticism: „je réponds, ou que cela n'est pas vrai, ou que ces magistrats avaient très-peu d'occupation.“ The learned Wachsmuth¹⁾ contents himself with merely designating it in a note as a „*seltsame Notiz*“; he had however, in his bulky work evidently not bestowed any very close attention on the subject, since he finishes off the entire question of suicidal legislation among the ancient Greeks in about half a dozen lines. Brückner, finally, in his successful prize-essay on ancient Massalia, adopts²⁾ the testimony of our anecdote-collector without hesitation as also without annotation. — My own impression on such a peculiar point does not lay claim to much value; it is, however, that we ought to accept the above communications, as far as they go, as authenticated. On the one hand, namely, Val. Max. would seem to have penned them not without reflection as to their probable origin: „*quam consuetudinem Massiliensium non in Gallia ortam, sed e Graecia translata inde existimo, quod*“ etc.; and, on the other hand, they, undoubtedly, receive corroborative support from what we learn through *more numerous* and in part also *more credible* sources respecting

¹⁾ *Deutsche Alterthumskunde*, Th. II, Abth. 1, p. 181, of edit. 1, and cf. also p. 263. ²⁾ *Historia reipublicae Massiliensium*, 1826, c. III, pp. 44, 45.

another ancient *Greek* colony of which we will now speak at greater length, and to which all ancient writers agree in ascribing an equal, if not a still greater, measure of ethical rigor.

VI. On the island of Keos or Kos, the present Zea.

According to the testimonies of nearly half a dozen ancient writers who respectively lived between the 4th cent. a. C. and the 3rd cent. p. C., and one of whom even speaks as an eye-witness, there existed, *during several centuries*, as we cannot but infer from what I have just hinted, among the inhabitants of this Cycladic isle, themselves presumptively of Lokrian origin, either a *custom* which prescribed, or a *law* which enjoined — this either — or we shall revert to by and by — that age-stricken persons of both sexes, after they had become incapacitated for the activity and enjoyment of life, and felt only its burden, should dispatch themselves by hemlock or poppies, thus making room for their younger posterity.

„The climate is so salubrious that the inhabitants, more especially the women, attain to a very advanced age, in consequence of which circumstance the island becomes over-populous; and (thence?): οὐ περιμένουσι γηραιοὶ τελευτᾶν, ἀλλὰ πρὶν ἀσθενῆσαι, ἢ πηρωθῆναι τι, οἱ μὲν μήκωνι, οἱ δὲ κωνεῖν ἑαυτοὺς ἐξάγουσιν. Thus Heraclides Ponticus¹⁾ in the 4th cent. a. C.

Καλὸν τὸ Κέϊων νόμιμον ἔστι, Φανία.

Ὁ μὲν δυνάμενος ἔξῃ καλῶς, οὐ ἔξῃ κακῶς.

Thus the Epicurean poet Menander's, in the 3rd cent. a. C., praise of the institution under mention, as quoted by Strabo²⁾ who himself, writing in the 1st. cent. p. C., expresses himself on our subject as follows. „Among the Ceans there *appears* once to have existed a *law* (δοκεῖ τεθῆναι ποτε νόμος) which *probably* (ὡς ἔοικεν) *commanded* all persons *above sixty* years of age to dispatch themselves by hemlock in order that sufficient food might not be wanting to the others“ (younger persons); and he then adds a story — which is not mentioned by any other ancient writer — to the effect that, when the inhabitants of Julis (one of the four ancient towns of Keos) were once besieged by the Athenians, the former *are said* (φασί) to have declared that the *oldest* persons among them should

¹⁾ Heraclidis Politiarum quae extant, recensuit et commentariis instruxit F. G. Schneidewin, 1847, p. 14. ²⁾ Geogr. lib. X, p. 684 of vol. II. in Meineke's edit. 1853.

die (doubtless, for the purpose just assigned by him), according to a fixed scale of years, whereupon the Athenians (from motives of humanity, we must presume) forthwith raised the siege.

„The Cceans have a *law* (νόμος ἐστὶ Κερίων) which obliges their very aged people to invite each other, as soon as they feel themselves unable to serve the State any longer, and begin to become childish in consequence of their age, to a friendly banquet, or to assemble as at a common sacrificial festivity, and then to drink hemlock-juice.“ Thus Aelian¹⁾ in the 3rd cent. p. C. And, finally, Valerius Maximus relates (lib. II, c. 6) the following incident which took place at Julis in the presence of Sextus Pompejus whom he himself chanced to be accompanying on the occasion.

„It happened just then that a very respectable, but already very aged, female there, after she had laid before her fellow-citizens her reasons for willing to die, resolved to poison herself, and believed that she should render her death more memorable by the presence of Pompejus. He, endowed with every virtue as well as with kindly feelings, did not like to refuse compliance with her request that he might come to her. Consequently, he went; but, for a long time, though in vain, he tried with that most persuasive address which flowed from his lips as out of a most copious fountain of eloquence to dissuade her from the resolution she had formed, and thus at last saw himself obliged to leave her to her purpose. Being already ninety years of age, she lay with the utmost serenity of mind and physical repose upon a bed which, as far as one could see it, was more splendid than her usual couch; and, reclining upon her elbow, she said: Sextus Pompejus, those Gods whom I leave (i. e. the terrestrial ones) will thank you more than those to whom I am now going (i. e. the celestial ones) for having as little refused to inspire me with the love of life as to become also a spectator of my death. Since Fortune has ever turned towards me the lovely side of her countenance, I will, in order that I may not, from a desire to live, be compelled likewise to behold its mournful side, exchange the remainder of my life for a happy end, leaving behind me two daughters and even seven grand children living. — After having then exhorted her relatives to concord, distributed her property among them, and handed over to her eldest daughter her ornaments and

¹⁾ V. H. lib. III, c. 37.

the domestic sacred objects (i. e. the Penates and the vessels used for their worship), she with her right hand resolutely grasped the cup in which the poison was prepared, then poured a little of the poison out on the floor as a libation to Mercury, invoked this Deity to bear her gently over into the subterraneous fields, and drank the deadly potion with eager draughts. She still named all those parts of her body which gradually became benumbed, and, when she could just say that the numbness was penetrating also to the bowels and the heart, she called her daughters to perform for her the last service by closing her eyes with their own hands.“

It might be expected that there should be some discrepancies on minor points in the various narratives above given, since they are more or less independent of one another and also separated by a considerable space of time. Thus, for instance, as regards the matter of age, Heraclides (ῥηπαῖοι) and Aelian (οἱ πάντο γεγηρακότες) express themselves merely *indefinitely*, whereas Strabo states distinctly above *sixty* years of age, the correctness of which statement, however, is manifestly nullified by Val. Maximus' narrative in which we are as distinctly assured that the Julisian heroine was already *ninety* years of age. But, far more important as well as interesting is another divergence which lies less on the surface, and which bids us enquire, whether the phenomenon under debate must be viewed as the consequence of a *real law*, or, only as the effect of an *ancient custom*? Strabo's and Aelian's νόμος, namely, and Menander's νόμιμον would *appear* to favor the former alternative; Bröndsted, however, denies¹⁾ that these words are here at all decisive, and he argues his point so ably that I cannot do better than transcribe the chief critico-philological comments he makes. „Sie bedeuten, wie allgemein bekannt, nicht bloß ausdrückliches Gesetz, sondern auch, und zwar ursprünglich, Sitte, allgemein angenommene Gewohnheit. So hat auch im Zeitwort wenigstens die passive Form νομοθετεῖσθαι nicht nur die Bedeutung von *verordnet, gesetzlich verfügt werden*; häufig liegt in ihr auch der Sinn: *Gewohnheit, Sitte werden*. Der einzige Strabon scheint nun freilich das Wort νόμος in jener Bedeutung von *Gesetz* genommen zu haben, aber er spricht davon wie von einer Sache, deren er nicht gewiß ist, da er bloß von Sagenhören oder aus dem

¹⁾ Vide pp. 62 – 66 of his antiquarian Travels in Greece as quoted in §. 10.

Berichte Anderer erfahren hatte." And, by way of stricture upon the „traditurs“ and „diciturs“ to which attention has above been drawn, when we introduced Strabo's words themselves, Brøndsted adds „**Strabon hätte sich bei seinem Vorgänger, Heraklides, den er sonst mehrere Male anführt, besser belehren können.**“ His own view is that we must regard the matter as perfectly deserving of credit, viz. what he calls the in and by itself manly and sound thought that death as conclusion of a long, ripe life which has at last become weak, but whose object has been already quite fulfilled, is not a misfortune, but a deliverance; and he finds this same thought incorporated in another Cean custom (which Heraklides likewise mentions, vide in Schneidewin the two lines prior to our immediate passage), according to which the men in Ceos did not put on any mourning, in the way of garments or of shaving off the beard, when deaths occurred in their families, but the mothers, on the contrary, mourned an entire year, when one of their children had died in tender youth. His own view, however, is, furthermore, that we must regard the matter as a mere custom — and, no doubt, Valerius Maximus' above narrative *favours* this opinion as the true one —, which he, Brøndsted, considers to have originated at a very early period, and, perhaps, in Keos itself first, and deems a proof that prior to the historical 5th or 6th century the population of this island was very large, that they were in a most flourishing condition, and, before the Athenians acquired supremacy over them, exercised a complete autonomy. Some of these last items are, perhaps, open to discussion; but I do not feel myself capable of undertaking the task, and therefore gladly proceed to introduce to the reader some little of what subsequent scholars, basing their observations more or less on what Brøndsted had communicated and conjectured, have put forth on our immediate question.

Boeckh, ¹⁾ agreeing perfectly with him on the main part of his assertions, additionally draws attention to sundry more or less corroborative circumstances, viz. that Meleager (Palat. Anthol. I, p. 449) calls with approval the hemlock-draught *Καίους χόλινας*; that the Cean physician Erasistratos, when old and suffering from an incurable wound, with the exclamation: „well it is for me that I remember my

¹⁾ *Berliner Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, Jahrgang 1827. Januar-Heft, pp. 15—20, in an elaborate critique of Brøndsted's work.

native land“, poisoned himself with hemlock (Stob. Serm. VII, 57); that kindred views and principles find an echo in what is ascribed to the Cean sophist Prodikos in Plato's Axiochos (c. 14, 6 ff., 9); and also in some extant utterances of the poets Simonides und Bacchylides who were both out from town of Julis.

Welcker is also of opinion, in his extremely detailed and learned dissertation on Prodikos of Keos,¹⁾ that a law is not to be so much as thought of; he, however, would fain restrict even the custom much more than either Brøndsted or Boeckh seemed inclined to do. „Es versteht sich, daß dieser Gebrauch nicht sehr allgemein gewesen sein kann; einzelne Beispiele reichten zu, ihn berühmt zu machen.“ He likewise doubts that either absolute hunger or relative want of sufficient food could ever have originated it. „So lange nicht alle Gränzen oder Meeresufer versperrt sind, wird der Hunger sich einen Ausweg finden, und der Keische Gebrauch trägt einen Charakter, welcher der Verzweiflung gerade entgegengesetzt ist.“ Finally, he conjectures that also Prodikos himself voluntarily emptied the Cean cup at Athens.

VII. In Kypros.

Dio Chrysostomos, a writer of the 1st cent. p. C., whose Orationes resemble in character and purport the Declamationes of Libanius, relates in one of them²⁾ that a certain Demonassa who once ruled as Queen in this island (which, by the by, was at a very early period inhabited by Greeks, though they would appear never to have become a ruling power there, in consequence of the temporary sway or the frequent influx of e. g. Phoenicians, Egyptians), gave three laws, the third of which — the first is too horrible to bear, and the second too puerile to deserve, mention here — was to the effect that the corpses of suicides should be cast away without burial: τὸν αὐτὸν ἀποκτείναντα ἄταπον φέρεσθαι. Dio, though a Stoic, lauds the intelligence evinced by, and the obedience paid to, this legislative enactment! But, on reading further in this same Oratio, we are struck by the following peculiar circumstances: though the said Demonassa had allowed her anti-suicidal law to be carried into effect against one of her two sons, she herself subsequently died by her own hand! and, what is more to the purpose, had ordered to be inscribed upon a pillar near her tomb the words: „I was,

¹⁾ Rheinisches Museum, B. I, 1833, pp. 611—616, but cf. pp. 608—627.

²⁾ Orat. 64, init., opera, edid. Reiske, vol. II, p. 328.

indeed, wise, but not fortunate.“ — What, then, are we to make, or can be rationally made, of this entire story, devoid of all chronology as it is? Did, we boldly ask, a Queen Demonassa ever exist in Cyprus? Doubtless, the name as such is possible — as the feminine of Demonax, — and really occurs (according to Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie* s. v.) twice in Mythology. But, by the by, its very etymological signification — *populi domina* — looks already somewhat suspiciously mythical; and, as far as I have been able to investigate the matter, by referring to monographies on this island, a Cyprian Queen of this name is utterly unknown to History. To me, therefore, though sundry very eminent both ancient and modern scholars, e. g. Fabrotus, Grotius, Hermann, Teuffel, as above quoted, have not hesitated to affirm on the strength of the passage under consideration that in Kypros the corpses of suicides were legally refused all burial, Dio's entire tale appears apocryphal, a bare rhetorical fable, and a fiction, moreover, which he himself, as we saw, has done much to deprive of credence, or, rather, perhaps, which he thereby himself meant to exhibit as devoid of authority.

Appendix. Legislation in reference to merely *attempted* suicide.

There would not appear to be any evidence to show ¹⁾ that suicide, if only attempted, not consummated, was punished in Athens or in any other State of ancient Greece. In all probability, no law on this matter was required, supposing even the attempt as such to have been viewed in the light of a deed to be more or less penally dealt with; for, much of what I have already stated in sundry portions of this Treatise, e. g. §. 9, may and must induce us to infer that those among the ancient Greeks who seriously willed to die by their own hands, were well nigh always successful in actually also compassing death. A very few isolated exceptions of such as either miscarried in the attempt, or stopped short from natural repugnance or faint-heartedness, occur to my memory at this moment; but, it is not necessary to specify them. (Ancient Roman history has pretty much the same tale to tell in this respect.)

¹⁾ Cf. Meier und Schömann, *der attische Proceß*, p. 310.

§. 35. THE ROMANS.

I. In the time of the Kings.

The elder Pliny records (H. N. lib. XXXVI, c. 15, sect. 24) what Anglicé runs thus. „I must here likewise touch upon a remarkable story, and must do so the more, because it has been left unmentioned by the most celebrated writers. Tarquinius Priscus built the work (i. e. a certain cloaca or sewer) by the hands of the people. The labor, however, was — one knew not, whether more wearisome or more dangerous —, and occasionally a Quirite escaped from the tedium of it by suicide (*conscita nece*). This king, now, invented a new remedy which had not occurred to anybody before him, and has not occurred to anybody after him. He ordered the corpses of all who died in this manner to be fastened to crosses (*figeret cruci*), exposed to the public gaze of the citizens, and, at the same time, left to be torn into pieces by wild beasts and birds. That sense of shame peculiar to the Roman people, and which has often in battles retrieved a lost cause, also then came to aid“, etc. (i. e. by way of putting an end to the said suicidal practice on the said occasion under the said king).

This narrative, though introduced by Pliny only incidentally, not by any means for a legal and still less for an ethical purpose, is the most detailed account we possess of what may or must be considered the most ancient known instance of a sort of (ritual) punishment of suicide among the Romans. Beside it, however, we will place the narrative of the same event by Cassius Hemina, one of the most ancient Roman historiographers or chroniclers, who flourished in the 3rd and 2nd centuries a. C., which narration forms the continuation of that passage in Servius' commentary on the *Aeneis* which we quoted for a specifically different purpose already in §. 9. [Cassius autem Hemina ait: „Tarquinius Superbum, cum cloacas populum facere coëgisset, et ob hanc injuriam multi se suspendio necarent, jussisse corpora eorum cruci affigi: tunc primum turpe habitum est, mortem sibi consciscere.“ Et Varro — thus Servius proceeds — ait: „Suspendiosis, quibus justa fieri jus non sit, suspensis oscillis, veluti per imitationem mortis, parentari.“] If, now, we take the pains to compare these two statements one with the other, various points of divergence will quickly present themselves to us which may prove of more or less importance for our immediate enquiry.

What, first of all, must strike every reader is, that the more ancient historian ascribes the measure under discussion to Tarquinius Superbus, and the later philosopher assigns it to Tarquinius Priscus. For reasons which will in the sequel declare themselves, this merely chronological discrepancy is not of much or any real moment; yet, for the sake of the completeness of our comparison, we will dwell upon it for a few moments.

Though Livy and Dionysius Halicarnassus, the latter more especially, speak at considerable length of what was done by and happened under both of the Tarquinii, not only does neither of them make even the most remote allusion to the incident before us, but it is not possible to glean from their pages aught but mere *collateral* and *indirect* evidence, evolving itself out of what is related about the nature of the public works commenced or completed by the respective two kings, and out of the characteristics given of each of them, on the matter at issue; yet, to them such a particular must have been much more important and interesting than it can be to those among us moderns who have ceased to believe in the *possibility* of earliest Roman story, as communicated in good faith by them; who, rather, regard the matter of the seven kings as, in part at least, only the result of lays and legends, to which chronology and unity were subsequently supplied by way of accommodation, and for the purpose of rendering it *vraisemblable*, apparently consistent with itself. If, however, the said matter of the seven kings be really merely a species of epic poem, it stands to reason that, in the course and conduct of the narrative of the Tarquinii, the identity of the family name, the relationship, the similarity of the public works etc. ascribed to each of them, might easily cause the one to be confounded with the other, as in the instance under debate, and that, where the horizon is so vague and deceptive, no accurate line of separation can be drawn, and where the mythical blends itself with the historical, what is, haply, earlier or later cannot be positively fixed. Each individual must, then, choose for himself which of the two vouchers he would give the preference to, and I myself should incline to subscribe in this particular rather to the authority of Cassius Hemina than to that of the elder Pliny. However, true to the specially historical aim of our performance, we will gather the votes of some few modern writers also on this insignificant item. Niebuhr does not specify our narrative in his great work, but, as far as we

may infer from his general allusions, he would appear to have inclined to ascribe the questionable measure to Tarquinius Priscus.¹⁾ In a later posthumous publication, however, he mentions it in so many words, and plainly intimates that it may have issued rather from Tarquinius Superbus. Here follow his own sentences on the subject.²⁾ „Daß die Regierung des Tarquinius Superbus glänzend aber entseßlich drückend war und die Tullianische Gesetzgebung mit Füßen trat: das mag der Geschichte angehören Tarquin hat das Unglück einer entseßlich poetischen Celebrität wohl viel mehr als er verschuldet haben mag. Wenn erzählt wird, daß Tarquin ungeheure Werke anlegte, den herrlichen capitolinischen Tempel erbaute, nachdem er die Aera dazu eingerichtet hatte, so ist möglich, daß er die Plebejer als seine Frohne knechte gebrauchte, daß viele sich das Leben darum nahmen, und daß er, um dies zu verhüten, die Todten ans Kreuz schlagen ließ. Behutsamkeit und Vorsicht ist hier anzuwenden, das Einzelne bleibt immer unsicher und nicht Alles, was sich nicht als unmöglich ableugnen läßt, ist darum wahr.“ Wachsmuth.³⁾ „Die beiden Tarquinier werden oft verwechselt; Plinius' Nachricht von dem übermäßigen Drucke beim Bau der Cloake ist, doch als der Uebertreibung verdächtig, auf den zweiten Tarquinius zu beziehen.“ Wächter, on the contrary, says (ubi supra, p. 89, Ann. 23) positively, but without assigning any reasons, that Cassius Hemina was wrong in referring the matter to Tarquinius Superbus. Arnold, finally, writes in somewhat indefinite manner thus.⁴⁾ „Tarquinius superbus made the people labour at his great works; he made them build his temple, and dig and construct his drains; and he laid such burdens on them, that many slew themselves for very misery; for in the days of Tarquinius the Tyrant it was happier to die than to live.“

A more vital enquiry, however, for our immediate purpose is this: supposing us to accept the communication before us as perfectly credible, what does it prove? Three things, if I mistake not, but then nothing further. 1. The said measure was adopted in reference to the suicide of the unfortunate individuals particularized, but was not therefore a law intended to apply to suicide *in general*. 2. Whilst the enactment at issue shows what a despotic ruler, whether

¹⁾ Römische Geschichte, Th. I. pp. 372—374 of edit. 2. ²⁾ Vorträge über Römische Geschichte, herausgegeben von Jöcher, 1846, B. I. pp. 195, 196. ³⁾ Die ältere Geschichte des römischen Staates, 1819, p. 160, Ann. 23. ⁴⁾ History of Rome, vol. I, p. 48 of edit. 3.

from tyranny or from policy, can and will do to compass his temporary and favorite ends, it did not therefore profess to be framed from any disapproval of suicide *in the abstract*. 3. Pliny's words „novum et inexcogitatum antea *posteaque* remedium“ explicitly convey that the law, if such we may call it, under mention did not remain in force after the reign of Tarquinius, whether Priscus or Superbus; at least, I cannot see any reason for restricting those words to the *exact mode* of punishment here recorded, but rather assume that they refer quite generally to any and every *similar* ignominy.

Before proceeding, I will illustrate these theses by two other somewhat parallel incidents which Plutarch¹⁾ communicates. „The Milesian virgins were once attacked by a dreadful and strange malady, of which one could not discover any cause. The first supposition was that the poisoned and pestiferous air had produced this change and derangement of the understanding in them. Suddenly, a desire to die manifested itself in all of them, and a mad inclination to hang themselves. And many did privately hang themselves. All the entreaties and tears of the parents availed just as little as the representations of friends. They in their suicide even deluded all attention and cunning of their guards. Thus the evil was considered a divine punishment against which human aid would not be at all able to prevail; but, at last, a proposal was made by the advice of a clever man, according to which those who hanged themselves should be carried naked across the market-place to the spot of burial. This proposition was approved of, and it not only checked the evil, but likewise destroyed in the virgins the desire for death.“ — In the 3rd cent. a. C., Ptolemaeus Philopator in Egypt commanded that the corpse of the fugitive Spartan king Kleomenes who had slain himself should, wrapped up in the skin of a wild beast, be affixed to a cross.

Beloe, now, as quoted in §. 9 — for Aulus Gellius narrates the same story about the virgins of Miletus — imagined the said decree of the Milesians to imply an *ethical verdict* against suicide per se, whereas it was just as little that as it was a *legal precedent*; it was, rather, palpably only a temporary and an exceptional measure of prudence and policy. — From the second incident Grotius

¹⁾ De virtutibus mulierum, Opera, T. VII, p. 22; Life of Kleomenes, c. 38 and c. 39.

(*de jure belli ac pacis*, lib. II, c. 19, V, 2) argued that during the rule of the Ptolemies in Egypt the corpses of suicides were ignominiously treated! Manifestly, however, as we learn from the context, what was done to Kleomenes was done, not because he had slain himself, but simply and solely because he had been the *chief* among the conspirators against Ptolemy; for, the same thing was *not* done to the other Spartans who had joined Kleomenes in the revolt and had slain themselves too. Similarly (vide *Diod. Sik.* XVIII, 47) the Macedonian Antigonus left the corpse of his suicidal *antagonist* Alketus uninterred, and treated it with ignominy; but, nevertheless, the Pisidians themselves buried it honorably.

Consequently, no *religious rite* and no *legal practice* can be reasonably supposed to connect themselves with the circumstance narrated by Cassius Hemina and the elder Pliny. Nevertheless, we will pursue their respective narratives still more closely for the purpose of showing that there are sundry most startling discrepancies, nay, contradictions, in the communications which Servius makes, not only when compared with Pliny's statement, but even when compared one with the other.

Pliny, as we saw, merely says that those ancient over-tasked Roman laborers *dispatched themselves*, but not in *what manner* they did so, and limits himself to relating the matter as an *isolated* fact, without drawing from it any inferences whatsoever in regard to subsequent opinions or practices among the Romans; Cassius Hemina, on the contrary, having first of all positively asserted that they had *hanged* themselves, forthwith declares that since that time suicide, i. e. *any mode* of self-destruction, has been considered *dishonorable*; and Servius himself, finally, though he quotes this latter statement, is very far from wanting to prove what it unmistakably conveys, but rather only this: that *self-suspension* alone was held to be dishonorable, since this was all and this was exactly what the specific line in Virgil (vide §. 9) called upon him to show; and for this purpose he quotes also that passage from Varro about the *suspendiosi* which we shall presently look into more closely.

Again, what Servius states is solely that the bodies of those who had hanged themselves were *cast away unburied*; but, surely, *more than this* is implied by the manner in which Tarquin treated the corpses of those ancient Roman workmen, so that also in this point of view we could not possibly regard the said treatment as an

exact *precedent*. Indeed, Servius himself evidently does not mean it to be viewed in any such light; for, speaking in his own person and on his own responsibility, he distinctly refers the matter of the non-burial of those who had hanged themselves to an interdiction in the *Pontifical Books*.

Whence, now, Servius got this piece of information, I do not in the least know; nor can we learn at this time of day, I presume. No doubt, the so-called Pontifical Books did contain as one of the essential items of the *jus Pontificium*, i. e. of the laws which were to guide the Roman Pontifices in their official procedure, the *jus Manium*, i. e. regulative instructions about the last honor due to the Dead, and about the propitiation of the Shades, consequently, whatsoever we should now-a-days call the *burial rites*, which the ancient Romans in a still greater degree than we ourselves considered as a part of the „*sacra*.“ There exist multifarious tales, I believe, about the origin and ultimate fate of these same Pontifical books. Roman tradition manifestly ascribed the germ of the *libri Pontificales* to the age and influence of the second king of Rome;¹⁾ náy, we are not only expressly told²⁾ that in the time of Numa the Pontifices had to give those who applied to them information concerning the usages to be observed at funerals, but we also read that, when about half a dozen centuries later several of the sacred books which had been buried with Numa, and which he himself had composed, were accidentally dug up, read, and forthwith burnt, seven of them were found to have treated de *jure pontificio*. The general assumption, however, is, if I mistake not, that the *libri Pontificales* were destroyed during the Gallic invasion in the time of Camillus. At all events, I am not aware that they are supposed to have been existent in the days of Servius, so that he must have penned the above statement from a sort of *traditional* information solely.

But, be all this as it may — much thereof is, doubtless, fabulous —, Cassius Hemina's own words „*tunc primum*“, i. e. *not until* the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, at all events exclude the Pontifical Books of Numa³⁾ from any direct or indirect influence on

¹⁾ Vide Livy, lib. I., c. 20, more especially the words „*nec — edoceret*.“

²⁾ In Plutarch's life of Numa, c. 12 and c. 22. ³⁾ Not quite irrelevant it may be here to remind ourselves that (Plutarch's Numa, c. 21) Numa's intimate friend, Marcius, is said to have destroyed himself, because unsuccessful in his candidature for the royal dignity against Tullius Hostilius; nay, that

the origination of that infamy in which suicide was, according to him, held by the Romans of his day (*habitu est*); and in this case it follows that Servius' „*cautum fuerat*“ must not be imagined to go as far back as the Numaic institutes in regard to self-suspension specifically.

I have thus brought forward the difficulties as succinctly and fairly as I could; and may safely leave the reader to make up his mind for himself, whether the said Pontifical Books were likely to have branded self-suspension specifically, or suicide in general: which former thing, however strange it may appear (but vide §. 9), is all Servius here avers; the latter thing he most assuredly does not in any wise pretend to maintain. — But, we must now proceed to his quotation from Varro which also has appeared to me beset with almost inexplicable difficulties.

It will, perhaps, be best to commence our comments with another statement which has reached us from the pen of a somewhat later writer, the Greek philosopher Artemidorus who flourished in the 2nd century of our era, in a more detailed form. The work in which it is contained¹⁾ is a somewhat odd and silly book in which our author treats us to his theories about dreams, and attempts to elucidate and demonstrate the correctness of his theories by an indefinite number of examples which he jumbles together, and one of which is to the following effect. Desirous of illustrating the fact that many things may be prefigured and foretold by a very few dream-hints, he tells of a certain man who had dreamt that his own name had perished. First of all, now, his son who bore his name, died shortly afterwards. By and by, he became ruined in his circumstances and dishonored in his reputation, so that he hanged himself (*ἐναρτήσας ἑαυτὸν, ἐταλεύτησε τὸν βίον*). Whereupon, Artemidor sets forth the fulfilment of the dream, i. e. the circumstance that the said man's name really became extinct, by remarking thus: Τοὐτούς γάρ μόνους ἐν νεκρῶν δεῖναις οὐ καλοῦσιν οἱ προσήκοντες. This remark, however, steps before us in „a most questionable shape,“ as I take it, for reasons which shall now be assigned.

(Plutarch's Romulus, c. 27) among the many accounts which existed about Romulus' death, one lets him have poisoned himself.

¹⁾ Oneirocritica, lib. I, c. 4, p. 16 in Reiff's edit., 1805. Cf. also lib. II, c. 50, p. 233. In vol. II, pp. 6, 221, 222 those notes of Rigault's and Reiff's will be found to which I shall by and by allude.

If we glance at our author's own Prooemium to this work of his, we learn that he had collected the materials for it on various travels in Greece, Asia Minor and Italy; and, when recounting the incident at issue, he mentions neither *name*, nor *place*, nor *date*, so that I cannot but feel in doubt, whether he allude to a *Greek* or to a *Latin* custom, which doubt we can only solve by bringing before ourselves the funeral rites of the ancient Greeks and the ancient Romans. Among the former, now, the actual burial (vide pp. 196—205 of the already quoted excursus in Becker's Charikles) was followed by a funeral banquet, at which the deceased himself was supposed to be the veritable host, and on each anniversary of his birthday, or, death-day, or, of both, funereal festivities were solemnized, and additionally proper banquets prepared and burnt. I have not, however, found mention made of the circumstance of calling out the name of the deceased on such occasions; but, we might take such a custom for granted, since the deceased would, doubtless, be thereby brought more individually and prominently into the remembrance of the living. Among the latter, the Romans, a similar custom would seem to have been observed even *more regularly* and *more rigorously*. Namely, about the 19th of February there was an annual general death-feast (Februario mense mortuis parentari voluerunt, Cic. de leg. II, 21; vide also Plutarch, Numa, c. 19, and Romulus, c. 21, and cf. Ovid's Fasti, II, 19 ff.; and, as I may incidentally observe, the very name of this month is said to hang together with sundry solemn purifying and atoning religious performances, februaire being an ante-classical Sabinic word = lustrare, purgare) which feast, however, was a sacrum popolare, not a sacrum publicum. And on this occasion the Manes, roaming everywhere about, were supposed to consume the sacrifices and libations made to them, black sheep, wines, odoriferous oils etc. by the Rich, flowers, fruits, bruised grain and some grains of salt etc. by the Poor, which were called feralia, feralium feriae, or also *parentalia*, because children and heirs were obliged to make them by way of conciliating the shades of the departed. The said day was marked in the Calendar with „Manibus parentatur.“ However, the said sacrifices and libations were likewise repeated out of the usual season, if certain causes for so doing existed. ¹⁾

¹⁾ Vide Eschsch, Privataltershäuser der Römer, 1842, p. 405.

The Latin poet Ausonius (he flourished in the 4th cent. of our era and was, doubtless, a Christian, though still moving in Pagan reminiscences and generally selecting Pagan heroes and customs for his poetical themes) has written no fewer than thirty brief versified panegyrics on his collective deceased relatives, grand-mothers and children included, which same very amiable effusions he calls *Parentalia*, and this term he himself thus explains ¹⁾: „titulus libelli est Parentalia antiquae appellationis hic dies, et jam inde a Numa cognatorum inferiis institutus“, adding: „nec quicquam sanctius habet reverentia superstitum, quam ut amissos venerabiliter recordetur.“ The last line but one of which, by the by, runs thus:

„Annua nunc moestis ferimus tibi iusta querelis.“

However, coming to our more immediate point, Ausonius therein instructs us that, as a suitable adjunct to the said ceremony, it was customary to cite the name of the deceased. ²⁾

„Voce ciere animas funeris instar habet.
Gaudent compositi cineres sua nomina dici.
Frontibus hoc scriptis et monumenta jubent.
Ille etiam moesti cui defuit urna sepulchri,
Nomine ter dicto paene sepultus erit.“

He has also penned twenty four poems in commemoration of the learned men of Bordeaux, his native city, in a sort of summary supplement to which we read the following two lines. ³⁾

„Viventium inlecebra est laudatio. Nomina tantum
Voce ciere, suis sufficiet tumulis.“

To which last passage Reiff draws attention, and it was, perhaps — for he does not discuss the matter — his chief reason for assuming without further ado that Artemidor is speaking of a *Roman* custom. I do not feel quite certain that the said passage or passages might not admit of a different interpretation: which matter, however, I may leave the reader to think over for himself.

This was the first of my doubts. The second is as follows. Are we bound to take for granted that Artemidor limits his „these only“ to such as had *hanged* themselves; for, possibly, though, I admit, not probably, the said *τῶν τοῦτων* might apply to *suicides* in general; not probably, I say, partly because of what we adduced

¹⁾ In the prose preface, *Opera, recensuit Tollius*, 1671, p. 109. ²⁾ *Ibid.* in the versified preface to the *Parentalia*. ³⁾ p. 188.

and benoted in §. 9, and, partly, because of the passage from Varro which still remains to be spoken about. At all events, however, we cannot but remain exceedingly skeptical as to the correctness of the following inference which Rigault inclines to draw from Artemidor's peculiar communication. „Quod autem in feralibus epulis suspendiosos non nominari ait Artemidorus, id ex libris pontificalibus! *fluxisse videtur*, quibus cautum fuisse notat Servius“, etc. Nor can I exactly discern the right Reiff had to conclude „unde recte ait Artemidorus“ etc. — *Perhaps*, since we have no authority for questioning our dream-expounder's veracity, he was, though he expresses himself quite generically, alluding only to some *local* or *rural* custom among the Romans in his time; for, as everybody knows, also among various rural populations at this time of day sundry peculiar superstitious rites and practices exist in regard to suicide in general, or, to some modes of suicide in particular.

Varro's communication, now, to which we at length return, is even more puzzling and perplexing than the one with which we have been just dealing; for, the feature it exhibits, turn it whichever way we will, borders upon what is almost ludicrous, not to express myself more strongly.

The term „parentare“ has found its sufficient explanation in what has been above said. The words „justa facere or ferre“ mean, of course, to perform the funeral with all its wonted rites, as everybody was obliged to do, thence also debita, under ordinary circumstances (cf. the Greek cognate expressions τὰ δίκαια, νόμιμα, etc.). But, about the substantively used adjective „suspendiosus“ modern writers are not by any means unanimous.

Kirchman, who, though his work be now antiquated, has remained the chief writer on the subject of Roman funerals, and to whose copious materials all later authors on the same subject are largely indebted, expressly distinguishes ¹⁾ what he calls „Suspendiosi et Αυτοχτενες“, though, by the by, he declares both of them sepultura prohibiti. The former term he explains by „cruciarum vel in patibulo suspensi vel cruci affixi“, i. e. *delinquents* who were thus *punished*: „nam qui hoc supplicio afficiebantur“; consequently, in express contradistinction to αυτοχτενες, such as had laid violent

¹⁾ Appendix ad libros IV. de Funeribus Romanorum, c. XI, pp. 726, 727, and cf. p. 714 of the already quoted edition.

hands upon themselves, — *not suicides at all!* Kirchmänn quotes some books by way of authorities; but, instead of consulting *them*, I opened Facciolati who simply explains our term in the manner in which most persons are in the habit of accepting it: „suspensiosus, adj. qui suspendio sibi mortem conscivit“, and refers us to only three passages, the first of which is the one before us; the other is in the elder Pliny (lib. 28, c. 4, sect. 12), which passage has occurred to us already in §. 9, where we could not well hesitate thus to render it; and the third is in the Pandects (lib. 3, lex 2, lex 11, §. 3), which passage will come before us, when we are speaking of ritual laws on suicide in the Justinian Code, wherefore I will content myself with remarking now that „nec suspensiosi, nec qui manus sibi intulerunt“ might at first sight appear to favor or even to demand some other interpretation, yet, as far as I can discern, the meaning really is: neither those who hang themselves¹⁾ — this mode is put *first* and *by itself* as the supposed most degrading one — nor those who dispatch themselves *in any other manner*, etc.: indeed, I distinctly remember having met with exactly the same juxta-position in Greek in the above sense, and also having quoted it in some § or other of this Treatise which I cannot at this moment recover. — Why, indeed, should suspensiosus have been formed to convey what suspensus already fully and unequivocally expressed?

But, whereas Kirchmann would fain exclude suspensiosus from meaning a suicide at all, others, e. g. if my memory do not deceive me, Moore as quoted in the Preface, would fain stamp it into signifying *any* and *every* suicide, one particular mode being put for the act in general, a sort of species for the genus. However, surely, then one would have selected a *more frequent* as well as a *less ignominious* manner of self-inflicted death; Varro, at least, would have done so, who (as well as the elder Pliny and the corpus juris civilis) did *not* (vide §. 19) view suicide per se with either contempt or abhorrence. Moreover, the passage just adduced from Artemidor seems to point, and the remainder of Varro's communication manifestly points, to *self-suspension specifically*. We, namely, therefrom learn that it was customary, by way of imitating their manner of

¹⁾ Also Dirksen in his *Manuale Latinitatis fontium juris civilis Romanorum*, 1837, s. v. explains the suspensiosus in this passage by qui suspendio sibi mortem conscivit.

death, to *hang up* a small image (*oscillum*) of the deceased, and thus to represent the manner in which he or she had died. I know not what such *oscilla* were made of, whether cork, wood, or clay,¹⁾ or really were;²⁾ equally little can I divine what so tasteless and heartless a piece of symbolical mockery or ridicule, in comparison with which the silence mentioned by Artemidor was dignity and wisdom, could mean, even if we were to adopt Ammon's³⁾ somewhat peculiar comment: „*Erbenkten parentirte man mit dem Stricke, an dem sie sich aufknüpften.*“ I again, therefore, incline to imagine that the said custom may have been confined to, perhaps, the peasant-classes only. Thus, for instance, Virgil, when narrating the mirthful and superstitious manner in which the Italian peasants celebrated a vernal feast in honor of Bacchus, and invoked him to spread his blessings over their fields or vineyards, relates:

„Et te, Bacche, vocant per carmina laeta, tibi que
Oscilla ex alta suspendunt *mollia* pinu.“

However, the testimony of Cassius Hemina has placed us in the middle, and that of Varro near the end, of the Republic, consequently, far away from the mythical or semi-mythical age of the seven kings, and, as it seems to me, nothing can be more satisfactorily proved, as far, as least, as legitimate inferences can be drawn from individual incidental passages and various historical facts, than this: that, during the several centuries of the Republic, neither suicide in general nor self-suspension in particular was punished at all. Montesquieu.⁴⁾ „Du temps de la République, il n'y avoit point de loi à Rome qui punit ceux qui se tuoient eux-mêmes: cette action chez les historiens, est toujours prise en bonne part, et l'on n'y voit jamais de punition contre ceux qui l'ont faite.“ Brotier⁵⁾ (after, however, having premised some less tenable observations):.... „nullae in republica Romana leges exstiterunt adversus eos, qui sibi violentas manus afferrent.“ But, some few pertinent ancient narratives, pretty generally known, but very variously interpreted by different writers, will be more to

¹⁾ Georg. II, 388, 389. Cf. J. H. Voss's remarks on this passage in his interesting Commentary on the Georgica. ²⁾ On the mere word itself cf. the lengthy remarks of Scaliger and Schriverius on *στροφάριον* in Ausonius' *Centio nuptialis*, pp. 503—505 of Tollius' edition of Ausonius' works. ³⁾ *Handbuch der christlichen Ethik*, Bd. II, Abth. 2, p. 18. ⁴⁾ *Esprit des lois*, liv. XXIX, ch. 9. ⁵⁾ Vol. IV, p. 464 of the *excursus variorum* in Naudet's edition of Tacitus.

our purpose than the mere dicta of even the most celebrated and erudite modern writers.

II. In the age of the Republic.

1. Ritual legislation.

Valerius Maximus, having previously related two other instances of paternal severity, recounts ¹⁾ what follows. „Tit. Manlius Torquatus, a man who combined many excellent qualities with his dignity, and was in an unusual degree conversant with the civil and religious laws (*juris quoque civilis, et sacrorum pontificalium peritissimus*), believed etc. (The story at issue is: D. Silanus, his own son, had received money from the Roman allies in Macedonia, of which province he had been governor, and the father, himself sole judge, being convinced of the fact, publicly disowned him in consequence. We will now let Val. Max. proceed in his own words.) Silanus, utterly confounded by his father's painful judgment, did not like to live any longer, and hanged himself (*suspensio se consumpsit*) in the night following. Inasmuch, now, as T. Manlius Torquatus had thus already shown himself as a thoroughly severe and conscientious judge who had made reparation to the Republic and had avenged Macedonia, paternal severity might certainly have moderated itself in consequence of such a sensitiveness-proving death (*vericundo obitu*) on the son's part. Yet, his father was not present at the young man's funeral (*neque.... exequiis interfuit*); nay, whilst the corpse of his son was just being borne away (*cum..... funus ejus duceretur*), he willingly listened to those who wished to consult him“, etc.

This event itself, now, occurred *in the first half of the 2nd cent. a. C.* Our author's narrative, however, not only does not contain the slightest intimation of the customariness, or even of the possibility, of leaving the corpse of one who had NB. even hanged himself uninterred, but manifestly conveys directly opposite testimony. And, if such was the case with one who had hanged himself, it follows from what has been quoted above from Roman writers themselves that a fortiori it was the case with persons who had destroyed themselves in some other manner. Indeed, who can adduce out of the entire history of the Republic even a single instance to prove the contrary? Whereas, without any effort of memory, dozens of

¹⁾ Lib. V, c. 8, nr. 3.

examples must occur to everybody acquainted with history which equally bear evidence to the non-existence of any ritual law soever against suicides during the Republic. Here a few instances in passing. Antony had Brutus carefully interred and burnt;¹⁾ Augustus ditto Antony, Cleopatra, and her two waiting-maids, Eiras and Charmion;²⁾ the people of Utica adorned Cato's corpse in the most splendid manner, arranged a solemn funeral, and interred him near the sea, where in Plutarch's day still a monument stood erected in honor of him;³⁾ Atticus was properly and solemnly interred near the Appian road („sepultus“ — in monumento avunculi“), festive pomp having been omitted only at his own express desire;⁴⁾ nay, finally, the Roman Senate voted laudation, a column of honor, and a funeral at the expense of the State to Marcus Juventius, the legate of Lepidus, when he, after having in vain endeavored to dissuade the latter from joining the duumvirate of Octavian and Antony, had in the face of the whole army plunged his sword into his own breast.⁵⁾

2. Fiscal legislation.

I am quite well aware that sundry modern historians have, and, perhaps, not without good reason, expressed a doubt, whether Appius Claudius, known by his infamous conduct towards Virginia, and Spurius Oppius, his cotemporary and equal in infamy, really died by their own hands. But, with this doubt we need not now concern ourselves, since our sole task is here to take Livy's narrative as it stands before us in the passage I am about to quote, and to draw from it the legal inference which it, the said Livian narrative, warrants us in drawing, nay, compels us to draw. The tyrannical and wanton Decemvir, then, Appius Claudius had, charged with a capital crime, been led off into prison, and the Tribunes had appointed a day for his trial and, of course, his condemnation. *Before*, however, the day of judgment arrived, he „sibi mortem conscivit.“ His co-operator, Spurius Oppius, who had rendered himself still more odious to the Roman people, and had likewise been conducted into prison, there before the day appointed for trial and judgment „finem vitae fecit.“ After which recital, Livy states what follows. „Bona Claudii

¹⁾ Plutarch's life of Antonius, c. 22. ²⁾ Ibid. c. 87. ³⁾ Plutarch's life of Cato, c. 71. ⁴⁾ Nepos' life of Atticus, c. 22. ⁵⁾ Dio Cassius, lib. 46, c. 51; vide also ibid. 37, c. 14; 43, c. 11; 47, c. 30 and 49; 51, c. 15. ⁶⁾ lib. III, c. 58.

Oppilque tribuni *publicavere*. Collegae eorum exsilli causa solum verterunt: *bona publicata sunt*."

We have here to deal with an occurrence in the first half of the 5th cent. a. C. It would, now, on the one hand, be palpably absurd to try to prove therefrom that the property of Appius Claudius and Spurius Oppius, always supposing them really to have destroyed themselves, was confiscated, because they had done so, in other words: that confiscation took place *as a punishment* for their suicide; for, also the estates of those Decemvirs who had not committed self-destruction, but had simply gone into exile, were confiscated on the identical occasion. The most ancient kind of Romish „exillum“, the so-called *Aquae et Ignis interdictio*, just as the *Deportatio* under the Emperors, *ordinarily at least*, involved, as I learn from Spangenberg ¹⁾ who quotes the needful proofs, the confiscation of property. But, on the other hand, it is self-evident from Livy's narrative that neither Appius Claudius nor Spurius Oppius *rescued their property from confiscation* by suicidally anticipating judicial condemnation. Unless, now, one could prove — and such proof is, I believe, impossible — that some changes in this respect were made in the Roman laws between the 5th and the 1st cent. a. C., the confiscation of the property of Appius Claudius and Spurius Oppius *was an illegal measure, an arbitrary procedure, which stands as such isolated* in the annals of the Roman Republic. We shall, namely, presently see that in the age of Cicero a person accused and arraigned might *according to law* avert the confiscation of his goods and chattels by voluntarily anticipating the verdict of condemnation; nay, we shall learn that such was the case also even under Tiberius, nay, up to a much later period of imperial rule. Therefore, we may and must aver that the above-mentioned confiscation, far from being legally a consequence of the suicide committed, was, because decreed *in spite* of the suicide committed, an exception: which is, however, easily accounted for by, and reconciled with, such extreme exasperation as the deeds yon two men had done during their lives had justly kindled in the breasts of both the Tribunes and the People. Similarly, though from less noble motives, some of the Caesars in some individual instances acted, i. e. they decreed, from vindictiveness, avarice, or cruelty, against law, *ere the law was altered in*

¹⁾ Ueber die Strafe der Verbannung bei den Römern, Neues Archiv des Criminalrechts, Bb. XI, pp. 525, 526.

this particular, the confiscation of the property of persons who had prevented a judicial sentence by self-dispatchment.

What I am about to relate from Valerius Maximus ¹⁾ took place between two men who from their profession and position could not but know, and whose opinions and actions in the case at issue must be presumed to have been in consonance with, the existent law. „C. Licinius Macer, formerly Praetor, father to Calvus, having been indicted on account of extortions, whilst the votes were being taken about him, ascended the Maenianum. When he, now, saw that M. Cicero, who had caused this judicial suit to be instituted, put off his praetexta, he sent a messenger to inform him that he (Macer) had died as a person merely arraigned, not already condemned, and that, *therefore*, his property could not be publicly sold (se non damnatum, sed reum periisse: *nec sua bona hastae posse subijci*). At the very same moment, namely, he stopped up his mouth and throat with the kerchief which he happened to have in his hand, and thus choked. When Cicero learnt this, he did not pronounce any sentence upon him (Qua cognita re, Cicero de eo *nihil pronuntiavit*). In such wise the celebrated and gifted orator (viz. Cajus Licinius Calvus) was by an unusual mode of death on the part of his father *preserved from poverty* (ab inopia rei familiaris vindicatus est), and from the disgrace of having one condemned among the members of his family. His death was a proof of courage.“ Inference: the property of a person who had died *by his own hand* as one not condemned, but *only arraigned*, could not be sold, not be withheld from his heirs; and, consequently, suicide was *anything but fiscally punished*.

III. Under the rule of the Emperors.

A. According to the historians.

1. Tacitus (Annal. lib. VI, c. 29).

„Nam promptas ejusmodi mortes (i. e. sibi manus inferentium) metus carnificis faciebat, et quia damnati publicatis bonis sepultura prohibebantur, eorum qui de se statuebant *humabantur corpora, manebant testamenta*, pretium festinandi.“ Thus a well-known, often-quoted passage. — No evidence can be either clearer or more unconditional than this which refers to the times of the blasé tyrant

¹⁾ Lib. IX, 12, §§. 7, 8. I must, however, intimate that Plutarch, life of Cicero, c. 9, lets this same Macer die a natural death from vexation or grief after he had been unanimously condemned. Vide also Cicero's epp. ad Atticum, I, 4.

Tiberius. Consequently, under his reign *still* suicide was neither ritually (*humabantur corpora*) nor fiscally (*manebant testamenta*) punished by the Roman laws. About the *fiscal* element there has been, as far as I am aware, no dispute, since pretty numerous passages occur in the same work in illustration of the principle here laid down (vide e. g. V, 6, 7; VI, 30; XIII, 30; and also XVI, 17). In regard to the ritual element, however, an objection has been raised on the ground that *humare*, though it, of course, implies some sort of interment, nevertheless excludes solemn sepulture, which latter was expressed by *sepelire*. But, speaking first of all quite in general, Roman writers themselves are uncertain, nay, at issue with one another, about the respective meanings of *humare*, *sepelire*, *cremare*, as far, at least, as religious solemnity is concerned. In the laws of the Twelve Tables (pp. 60, 61 in Zell's edition) *crematio* is, according to Cicero's explanation (*de legg.* II, 23) expressly opposed to *sepultura* (a word of unknown etymology, I believe); whereas according to the elder Pliny's probably more correct interpretation (*H. N.* VII, 54) *sepultura* is burial in general, and *humatio* (on its etymology vide what has been said on p. 155 of §. 34) only the putting under ground. The earliest Roman burial-rite is, according to Becker,¹⁾ whom see on this matter in general, supposed to have been that of interment (*humatio*), that of burning (*crematio*) having come up at a later period, though some Patrician families, e. g. the gens *Cornelia*, still adhered to the ancient mode up to the time of *Sylla*. However, burning did not exclude interment, since the ashes were afterwards always interred, i. e. deposited in an urn in a tomb. Speaking, then, secondly, in reference to the Tacitean communication before us, two things are indisputable. a. *Humare* and *sepelire* are manifestly here used *synonymously*, since *humari* is interchanged with *sepultura non prohiberi*. b. In the days of *Tiberius*, those whose corpses were treated ignominiously, i. e. the *insepulti*, received *no manner or measure of burial at all*: „those executed — *Suetonius* says²⁾, were without exception flung down the *Gemonian* stairs and dragged thence into the *Tiber*, which thing hap-

¹⁾ *Gallus*, *B.* II, pp. 291 — 293 of edit. 1. ²⁾ In his life of *Tiberius*, c. 61. Vide also *Tacitus*, *Ann.* VI, c. 19, and *Dion Cassius*, lib. 58, c. 15, which last passage we shall presently have to quote. Cf. likewise *Suetonius*, *ibid.* c. 75, and in his life of *Julius Caesar*, c. 82, and in his life of *Vitellius*, c. 17.

pened to twenty on one day, among whom there were boys and women."

2. Dio Cassius (lib. 58, c. 15; and part of c. 16. Vide also lib. 57, c. 22).

This equally credible and weighty, though somewhat later, witness, whilst speaking of the many who were immediately or mediately subjected to such displeasure and doom as *Tiberius* visited upon *Sejanus*, once his favorite and minister, confirms almost literally the above statement of his fellow-historian's, and, indeed, treats of the matter, as it was his wont, far more minutely, nor without even an acute side-glance, which was less his wont, into the soul of the monster-hypocrite, and such palpable indignation as must reflect some credit at least on his own character. „Many of those arraigned presented themselves in person, defended themselves, and spoke with great frankness; but, most of them despatched themselves (αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοὺς διέφθειραν), before they were condemned: this they did more especially in order to escape from ignominy (ὑβρις) and maltreatment (ἀνία); for, all those arraigned on the above account, not only knights, but even senators, not only men, but also women, were driven together into the state-prison, and there executed after they had been condemned, or, at the command of the tribunes of the people or also of the consuls, hurled from the Tarpejan rock, and their corpses all dragged together to the market-place, and thence cast into the river. Others, however, likewise did so (i. e. despatched themselves), in order that their property might descend as heritage to their children (ἤδη δὲ, καὶ ὅπως οἱ παῖδες τῶν οὐσιῶν αὐτοῦς¹⁾ κληρονομήσω). For, there are only few examples of the property of suicides being confiscated (ὀλίγα γὰρ πᾶσι τῶν ἐθελοντηδὸν πρὸ τῆς δίκης τελευτώντων ἐδημεύοντο), *Tiberius* designing thereby to induce the people to self-destruction, for the purpose, namely, of avoiding the appearance of having caused them to be executed, as if it were not even more cruel to compel a person

¹⁾ Lipsius, in his ad Annales Cornelii Taciti liber commentarius, 1581, p. 271, here inserts μή, and declares the above reading „puero mendum clarum.“ He then connects the ὅπως x. τ. λ. with the previous sentence about the ignominy inflicted upon the corpses. To me, however, this emendation does not commend itself as probable, and I prefer commencing as above a new sentence, i. e. regarding πάντες γὰρ ἐμβαλλετο as a parenthesis; and, indeed, Reimarus, in his edition, encloses those words in brackets.

to self-despatchment than to despatch him by the executioner's hand. The property of those, on the contrary, who did not lose their lives in this manner (οὐτως, i. e. by self-despatchment) was mostly confiscated, and the accusers got little or nothing of it; for, at this period, Tiberius began to care for money more than he formerly had done. Almost everybody, even those who despatched themselves, remembered him in his Will. For the same reason which induced him not to appropriate the property of suicides, he likewise brought all accusations before the Senate, viz. in order, as he mentioned, to be himself without guilt, and to let the Senate condemn itself as guilt-stained."

We, now, certainly do learn from the above „ολιγαί πανο“ of Dio Cassius, as well as from sundry isolated instances in his work and in Tacitus' Annales that Tiberius no less than several of his successors, and, perhaps, also Augustus already, occasionally did in actual *practice*¹⁾ deviate from the legal *principle* implied in what Tacitus maintains to have been the „pretium festinandi;“ and such *anomalous exceptions* which here really do „prove the rule“ must be thus conceived: if a person were arraigned for or accused of „crimen majestatis“, a conviction of and condemnation for which involved the confiscation of property, the trial was continued after his voluntary death, and, was he (really or, at least, declaredly) completely proved guilty of the said crime, his property was withheld from his heirs or legatees, and either distributed among the informers (whether the so-called delators got anything, or how much they got, was, as far as I can discern, different under different reigns) or placed in the imperial treasury. But, as we shall by and by endeavor to establish, many Caesars had succeeded to Tiberius, ere changes were introduced into Roman Jurisprudence which constituted into recognized and accepted law what still stands before us as a merely violent, arbitrary, tyrannical measure, in part the inspiration of avarice, — for often, e. g. under Nero, the accusation itself was made merely for the very purpose of getting hold of the property *somehow* — in part the consummation of cruelty, and as such manifestly, as before said, conceived and represented by both Tacitus and Dio Cassius.

¹⁾ The case of Libe Drusus under Tiberius (Tacitus, Ann. II, 27—32, and Dio, lib. 57, 15) is, perhaps, the one best known; but various others the reader will find specified in Prof. Dr. Rein's already quoted work, Ann. on p. 384.

B. According to rhetoricians, glossators, inscriptions.

1. The elder Seneca (as quoted in §. 6).

Those works of this writer, who flourished under Augustus and Tiberius, which here concern us have reached us only either in a mutilated form or in mere fragments and extracts; and in one of them we find what follows.¹⁾ *Lex.* Homicida in se insepultus abjiciatur. Thema. Quidem se occidit. Petitur ut insepultus abjiciatur. Contradicitur etc. Pars altera. Facinus indignum, si inveniantur manus quae sepeliant eum, quem occidere suae.“ — Prof. Bähr,²⁾ judging of Seneca's works of this character from a purely literary standing-point, pronounces the *Controversiae* „speeches delivered in the rhetor-schools of that time on *fictitious cases* (erbüchtete Fälle), chiefly extracted from the rhetorical works of the Greeks and Romans, so that they can give us a notion of the manners of those *scholastic* exercises; and of similar contents in his *suasorium liber*, a collection made later, but which has apparently likewise not reached us in its complete form.“ If, however, the cases pleaded be fictitious, why should not also the *laws* introduced into the discussion be themselves *imaginary*? Therefore, we should deem ourselves quite justified in assuming a priori the possibility of the above „lex“ being, as far as Rome was concerned in those days, purely *suppositional*, based upon a reminiscence of some Platonic or Aristotelean passage in relation to Greece, but coined into a *more definite* and *severe* form as well as into a *general rule*. If, however, such an assumption would already render the demonstrative force of Seneca's statement extremely dubious, what Tacitus and Dio Cassius have above testified to us must deprive it utterly of all such force, unless I be sadly mistaken. As we saw in §§. 6 and 7, the ethical opinions with which our author here interlards his oratorical flourishes, when he is declaiming on both sides of the question, are rather calculated to excite our curiosity for a moment than to engage our serious reflection, and the legal statements (vide what was already said §. 6, p. 54, and §. 34, pp. 157, 158) contained in suchlike compositions were scarcely meant to do more than serve as pegs whereon to hang arguments the discussion of which might while

¹⁾ Lib. VIII, controuv. 4 of the *controversiarum libb.* X; cf. also the merely fragmentally preserved controuv. 1 of lib. V. ²⁾ *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur*, B. II, p. 320 of edit. 3.

away an idle hour, as any Utopian hypothesis, if cleverly managed, fitly may do.

2. Quintilian.

It has been doubted, and is still doubted, whether the celebrated Roman writer of this name at the commencement of the second cent. p. C., or, rather, at the conclusion of the 1st cent. p. C., be the author of the „Declamationes“ with two of which¹⁾ more especially we are now about to deal. Since, however, there would not seem to be any doubt about the fact that they were at all events penned by some Roman rhetor in the 1st and 2nd centuries of our era, we may safely regard and discuss them as Roman documents belonging to that period, be their author who he may (vide e. g. Bähr ubi supra §. II, p. 328). Well then, inscribed over those respective Declamations are inter alia as „argumentum“ the following words. „Qui caussas voluntariae mortis in Senatu non reddiderit, insepultus abjiciatur.“ „Qui caussas in Senatu voluntariae mortis non adprobaverit, insepultus abjiciatur.“ That is, as we learn from the contents itself of the said two Declamations, a person intending to commit suicide, and desirous of escaping the fate of having his corpse cast away without burial, must communicate his intention to the Senate, show that he has a *non-criminal-cause*, i. e. non-criminal according to Stoic or Epicuric philosophy or the existent laws, for the action he is about to commit, and, having done so, he is at liberty to dispatch himself, though it is not therein expressly stated that the Senate actually performed the office of giving him what we should call *permission*, much less, that of supplying the *means*, as we found to be the case with the Senate of Massalia, so that even in this respect the parallel which sundry old legal writers, e. g. Heigius,²⁾ draw between the two Senates is not quite correct: „quam (i. e. a causa justa) et prius *Senatui Romano*, et Massiliensi approbare necesse erat: ut, hac mora interjecta, medicinam forte aliquam morto mature afferendi occasio non deesset. Unde Quintilianus,“ etc. Which quotation at the same time informs us that Heigius viewed the already mentioned two Declamationes as legal authorities; but, not by any means he alone: many other writers in the two last centuries do the same, e. g. Meursius (in his already quoted Them. Att. I, 19) and Reimarus.³⁾

¹⁾ Decl. IV and Decl. CCCXXXVII. ²⁾ Quaestiones juris tam civilis quam saxonici, edid. Person, 1619, pars II, quaestio 36, pp. 302, 303. ³⁾ Notes on Dio Cassius, vol. II, pp. 1156, 1157.

— Old Cujacius already had drawn attention¹⁾ to the difference of *technical terminologies* in the „schola rhetorum“ as compared with the „forum“, when alluding to Quintilian and Seneca; but no more, I believe Need I detail the singularity and absurdity of the reason which e. g. the petitioner in Decl. IV is made to assign, viz. the fear of killing his own father, should he remain alive any longer, because, in sooth, a Mathematicus had predicted that he would do so after certain eventualities had come to pass which the said Astrologer had also foretold, and which really had already occurred? Leaving the reader to peruse for himself also the said dutiful and apprehensive son's semi-Epicuric and semi-Stoic, both general and personal, pro-suicidal arguments, we will quietly make mention of such reasons as can scarcely fail to convince us that also Quintilian, like Seneca, is here, for sheer rhetorical purposes, creating fictitious laws and pleading imaginary cases. a. He, proveably, does so on other occasions in reference to other matters, and does not even mind tumbling from time to time in the course of the process into palpable self-contradictions (vide examples in Wächter, ubi supra, p. 264). b. If he use the address: „Patres conscripti“, this circumstance does not in and by itself in any wise prove that he is discussing a *Roman* custom at all, since, whilst writing in Latin and for Romans, he would naturally employ, by way of bringing the procedure more livelily before the imagination of his readers, such official forms of speech as were current at Rome; and he does not anywhere state in direct terms that he wishes his readers to take for granted that he really is discussing a Roman custom, or, indeed, a legal institute existent anywhere at all. c. When Valerius Maximus, a century or so previously, recounted the Massilian institution and the Cean custom, he speaks of the former with evident astonishment, finds necessary to make some few elucidatory and justificatory comments on it, is somewhat puzzled to know whence it could have originated, and, wavering between *Greece* and *Gaul*, never bestows the remotest thought upon aught kindred at *Rome* itself; and his account of the latter he winds up with a sort of punning expression of his own and Pompey's awe-struck emotion as over an occurrence extraordinary to both of them. If, however, anybody should suggest that what did not exist at Rome in Valerius Maximus' time might have, nevertheless, existed a century later, how

¹⁾ Observationum et emendationum libb. XVII, lib. IX, c. 13, p. 408, 1578.

comes it that no historian hints at so strange a change's having been made? d. The conclusion we, therefore, very naturally arrive at, is simply this: not only may not any legal weight be attached to the said two Declamations, but they must be viewed as school-themata suggested in all probability by a knowledge of what had been told by earlier Roman writers about the practice prevalent at Massilia.

However, though there be no Roman historical record, cotemporary, earlier, or later, which could lead us to subscribe to Quintilian's statements, there is a passage in Dio Cassius, the original of which I quoted for a different purpose on p. 106 of §. 29, which, referring to the year in which Quintilian is supposed to have died, viz. 118 p. C., the first of Hadrian's reign, has really been understood, i. e. misunderstood, as conveying something identical or cognate with what the above two Declamations apparently asserted. I must request the reader to turn to the quotation I have just referred him to; and, laying the requisite stress upon the power and significance of the little word *xai*, *and*, or *even*, he will scarcely be disinclined to paraphrase Dio's piece of intelligence thus: the Emperor Hadrian together with others, i. e. he not acting *officially* on this occasion, but only in a perfectly *private* capacity, *along with others*, viz. friends and admirers of our philosopher's, and (as the context would lead us to suppose), after having even used greater or minor exertions to dissuade Euphrates from a voluntary death, yielded at last to the importunity of his entreaties, and left him to follow his vehement desire for death. Which same *xai* in the said force Reimarus and Sturz („quum ei Hadrianus etc. concessisset“) and Tafel („indem Hadrian selbst“ u. s. w.) had overlooked in their respective versions, and to which Falck¹⁾ was the first to draw special attention. However, a few comments on this same passage may be welcome to some of my readers, since they will tend to place Falck's interpretation on a still firmer basis or, at least, in a clearer light.

a. We cannot suppose the Emperor Hadrian to have used his dissuasions, because he, perchance, disapproved of suicide as such, but rather only, because he wished to preserve Euphrates' life and intercourse still longer for his own, the dissuader's, pleasure or advantage. Surely,

¹⁾ Beitrag zur Lehre vom Selbstmord in the Neues Archiv des Criminalrechts, 1830, B. XI, pp. 143—146.

namely, Hadrian cannot have objected very strongly upon principle to suicide, since, according to the same historian,¹⁾ he himself, when tortured by violent bleedings at the nose, often wanted to take his own life away; and, when the loss of blood had caused a dropsy, often actually asked for poison and a sword, neither of which, however, anybody would give him; nay, actually promised the Barbarian Mastor money and impunity, if he would but stab him. Deprived of strength to kill himself in a direct manner, he did so indirectly by eating and drinking such things as could not but cause his death. Into the bargain, we know that he paid extraordinary, even *divine*, honors to the memory of the Bithynian youth Antinous who had been the object of his equivocal affection, and who probably — for the narratives on this point are somewhat confused and ambiguous — had drowned himself in the Nile. I here mention these few particulars the rather, because, as we shall presently learn, Hadrian was, probably, the first Roman Caesar who personally interfered to alter the laws so as to cause them to visit the suicide of civilians and soldiers, if committed for the purpose of evading a trial or military service, with certain definite punishments.

b. The younger Pliny's account (vide §. 29) of his own anxious efforts to preserve his friend Corellius Rufus from starving himself to death is, as Falck observes, a perfectly parallel case, and it (vide cf. 12 of lib. I) had occurred only a little earlier, viz. under *Trajan*. We might also remember the case of Coccejus Nerva under *Tiberius*, whom²⁾ this Emperor, even he, tried by *requests*, but in vain, to divert from his resolution to destroy himself, merely urging that he had no *sufficient* reasons for quitting life, since his health was not affected, his station was exalted, etc. Or, even that of the senator Gallus Terrinius under *Augustus*, whom³⁾ the Emperor, though he was not very intimate with him, visited, because, having become blind, he intended to starve himself to death, and diverted from his purpose by comforting representations. Finally, we might add as illustrative instance the behaviour of Perikles towards the philosopher Anaxagoras.⁴⁾ No sooner had he learnt that Anaxagoras intended to starve himself to death than he repaired full of consternation to

¹⁾ Lib. LXIX, c. 17, c. 22, c. 11. ²⁾ Vide Tacitus, Ann. VI, c. 26. Cf. also another similar example ibid. c. 48. ³⁾ Vide Suetonius' life of Augustus, c. 58. ⁴⁾ Plutarch's life of Perikles, c. 16.

him, imploringly requested him to preserve himself, and deplored less him than himself who was to lose a counsellor in the administration of public affairs.

c. It is true, as Falck observes, ἐκτρέπειν has a double meaning (to urge, to command, as well as to yield, to permit, vide Pape's *Griech. Wörterb.* s. v. under 2, 3: *einräumen, auftragen*, and cf. the French *faire* and the German *lassen*). But, no doubt, only the meaning we have made choice of is here applicable. For, if the other signification had been intended, the Emperor would surely have been mentioned *alone*, not in conjunction with others, since no other persons could be supposed to have possessed the *same* amount of power; and, moreover, the advanced years and the declining health of Euphrates are expressly assigned as reasons which could induce him himself, as a Stoic philosopher of that time, to wish for, incline to, and compass voluntarily, death.

d. The *Caesar* and the *Senate* were already at this period, not only formally and nominally, but even virtually and really, distinct powers. If, therefore, Reimarus (ubi supra) and Tafel,¹⁾ both refer to this passage, the former to prove that „*injussu magistratus*“ and without having assigned the reasons „*in senatu*“ suicide was not permitted, and the latter to prove that „*die Erlaubniß zum Selbstmord muß bei der Obrigkeit nachgesucht werden*“ — they manifestly employed the case before us for a purpose which it could not judiciously, I believe, by any mode, of interpretation be used to answer.

3. Festus.

„*Carnificis loco habebatur is, qui se vulnerasset, ut moreretur.*“ This brief notice is to be found in the said grammarian who wrote in the 4th cent. of our era, or, rather, in Paulus Diaconus' *Excerpta* from his „*de verborum significatione.*“²⁾ But, *when* among the Pagan Romans was a suicide considered = an executioner, or a murderer, or villain? How much further do we get by Müller's referring us to Cassius Hemina, as quoted by Servius, and assuring us that he „*hujus moris originem prodit?*“ Or, what ground can Gothofredus possibly have to stand upon, when he limits³⁾ this verdict to *self-suspension* only? Or, who can prove — the bare assertion I have

¹⁾ *Bändchen* XVI, p. 2051 of his *historisches Register* to Dio. ²⁾ Lib. III, p. 64 in Müller's recent edition. ³⁾ *Auctores linguae latinae in unum redacti corpus*, p. 264.

met with — that even in Festus' age the Roman Pagans regarded *suicides in general* as „infames“ in the antique legal sense of this stigma? The lengthiest note I have found is by Scaliger,¹⁾ who refers us to Hemina, Varro and Artemidor in the same breath, and, nevertheless, assures us that *every species* of suicide is here meant. We are thus whirled about in a circle, and may fairly be pardoned for growing somewhat dizzy.

4. Inscriptions.

Even still less able, finally, have I been to convince myself that anything resembling clearness and certainty in regard to anti-suicidal Roman legislation during the reign of the Pagan Caesars can be gained by soliciting the aid of some few inscriptions of which I have found mention made in the one or the other work which I have perused or consulted. — For instance, Hermann (p. 1370 of the essay quoted in §. 18) informs us that in an inscription at Ratti, belonging to the time of Hadrian, and communicated in a work²⁾ to which I have not had access, the words „*quisquis ex quacumque causa mortem sibi adsciverit, ejus ratio funeris non habebitur*“ are to be found among the statutes of a fund for those who are left (*Sterbcaffen*). But, if I mistake not, this exclusion of all suicides from participation would not necessarily imply a legislative disapproval of suicide, but may be simply interpreted in about the same manner as our present exclusion of suicides from participation in the proceeds of an insurance effected on their own lives, i. e. as a very natural and very legitimate measure and maxim of *business-policy*. — Nor does this matter stand differently, as far as I can discern, with e. g. yon other ancient Roman inscription which we spoke about already in §. 9.

C. According to the Corpus Juris Civilis.

Before we enter upon our journey through the both very numerous and very puzzling labyrinthic windings of this bulky and, *as far as our subject comes into play*, most strangely arranged, or rather non-arranged, volume, I will take the liberty of indulging in a few preliminary suggestions for the purpose of intimating that neither the Roman Jurisconsults, out of whose fragments etc., nor the Roman Caesars, out of whose rescripts etc. the Justinian Code

¹⁾ As given on p. 68 of the edit. by Dacerius in usum Delphini. ²⁾ *Viz. Diss. dell' Acad. Romana d'Archeologia*, 1825, T. II, p. 437 sqq.

was mainly constructed, were *in the least likely* either to declare or to consider suicide as such, i. e. in and by itself, an illegal or immoral action, an action which clashed with man's natural rights or social duties.

Firstly. As we have seen, there had been both in the usages and the writers during the Republican ages of Rome an entire absence of everything that could have served as a precedent or warrant for an ethical anti-suicidal verdict. Secondly. The two systems of philosophy, Stoicism and Epikurism, which prevailed in the days of pagan Imperial Rome, as we know, vindicated and encouraged suicide. Whether, as some have averred, many or most of those most celebrated juriconsults, e. g. Papinian, Paulus, Ulpian, Marcian, whose legal opinions and fixations on our topic have found a place in the Justinian Code, were Stoics, I am unable to say; but, when we read in Tacitus (Ann. VI, 26) of the *suicide* of Coccejus Nerva under Tiberius and in Pliny (lib. I, epist. 22) of that of Titus Aristo under Trajan, and learn that the former was „*omnis divini humanique juris sciens*“ and the latter „*quam peritus et privati juris et publici!*“, it is not difficult to believe that several of the ablest and most influential lawyers of the imperial times cherished pro-suicidal sentiments of a similar Stoic character. If the one or the other Emperor of the worst class, e. g. Domitian,¹⁾ banished the Stoics, or one or the other individual Stoic, from Rome and Italy, pro-suicidal opinions had, doubtless, nothing to do with such expulsion, but only, rather, their opposition in general, if not to the principle of monarchy, yet to the abuse of that principle, and to the degeneracy of the age, an opposition which rendered them more dangerous to tyrants than the Epikurists were who inclined to swim with the stream, if but on that stream present enjoyment, howsoever precarious and fleeting, might be snatched. At all events, however, Nerva or Trajan already recalled them. Thirdly. Many of the Caesars and their nearest relatives themselves died suicidally, e. g. Nero, Otho, the elder Gordian, Maximinus Hercules, Agrippina, Julia Domna, Quintilius, Florian; others contemplated or attempted suicide, e. g. Claudius, Galba, Hadrian, Heliogabalus, Maximin, Diocletian; and one publicly vindicated and eulogized it, Marcus Aurelius: which thing, nevertheless, did not in the least inter-

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Suetonius' life of Domitian, c. 10, where, however, *all* philosophers are mentioned.

fere with their becoming *divinized* after their respective deaths. Fourthly. And, if these last mentioned facts could scarcely fail to contribute towards preventing the Emperors themselves from stigmatizing suicide per se as a guilty act, considerations of policy, justice, generosity, humaneness, self-defence must, we should think, have tended to induce the jurisconsults of their times not to brand an action to which even, nay, just, the wisest and best might ever and anon feel themselves tempted, aye, be all but driven, by the occasional pressure, cruelty, caprice, wantonness, injustice and insecurity which circumvented them. A madly wanton Caligula or a gladiator-monster Commodus might almost any day occupy the seat of power as well as a Trajan or a Titus, and before *them* only the stupid, the mean, or the beggared were *really safe*, because they themselves were really safe only before *such*!

But, proceeding from mere a priori to a posteriori reasons, there really does not appear, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the most judicious and searching among the modern expounders of the Justinian Code, to be therein even a single passage which, if according to context and analogy closely investigated and scrupulously interpreted, would warrant us in affirming that the corpus juris civilis ever pronounced or believed suicide to be *for its own sake* a guilty or culpable action, aught *morally* or naturally, socially or *legally* wrong. Nevertheless, as modern Divines (vide Sections IV and V) can prove almost anything by fastening upon some detached passage and strong expression in the O. or the N. Testament, so modern Lawyers would seem often to be able to extract a multitude of weighty consequences from some one or other passage in what is to many among them a sort of Law-Bible. Thus, for instance, those two passages (dicta of Ulpian and Marcian) which we briefly elucidated in §. 6 have been by many writers rendered subservient to proving *the opposite* of what I have just asserted; and also that passage to which allusion was made in §. 10 has been used for the very same purpose. But, perhaps, the chief argument of the said class of writers has been based upon the following enunciation of Papinianus.¹⁾ I will quote the entire passage, since the corpus juris is not by any means a book which the generality of educated Englishmen have on their library-shelves, though only a very small portion of it will

¹⁾ Dig. (Pand.) lib. 48, tit. 21, lex (fragm.) 3, at the commencement.

claim our particular attention. Marcianus libro singulari de Delatoribus. „Qui rei postulati, vel qui in scelere deprehensi, metu criminis imminantis mortem sibi constituerunt, heredem non habent.“ Then follows. „Papinianus tamen libro sexto decimo Responsorum ita scripsit, ut, qui rei criminis non postulati manus sibi intulerint, bona eorum fisco non vindicentur: non enim *facti sceleritatem* esse obnoxiam, sed conscientiae metum in reo velut confesso teneri placuit: ergo aut postulati esse debent, aut in scelere deprehensi, ut, si se interfecerint, bona eorum confiscentur.“

Whenever, now, in any ancient book, e. g. the N. T. itself, the MSS, especially the most ancient and accredited ones, exhibit different readings of one and the same passage, and each reading makes both logically and grammatically in and by itself good sense, it would, in the first place, be extremely hazardous to ascribe to either reading *the force of a proof* of any otherwise doubtful point; and, in the second place, the universal canon of criticism prescribes that the preference should be given to that reading which is philologically the more difficult one, and harmonizes most thoroughly with the spirit and character of the entire work. Let us, then, consulting such learned authorities as are within our reach, apply these simple remarks for a moment to the case before us.

The reading „*facti sceleritatem*“ makes, no doubt, in and by itself quite good sense, and *sceleritas* would, of course, have to be conceived as involving *moral condemnation* or *disapprobation*. Dirksen who, in the already quoted work s. v. explains *sceleritas* by *scelus*, *impietas*, refers only to the passage before us; and, as far as I can learn, it is an ἀπαξ λεγόμενον not only in the corpus juris romani, but in Latinity in general (vide Freund's Lat. Wörterb. s. v. where our passage too is quoted, but Martian (sic) erroneously put instead of Papinian). Yet, the circumstance of *sceleritas* being a vox inaudita need not in and by itself militate very strongly against its being possibly the correct reading; for, in consequence of the paucity of Latin writers extant, multitudes of once customary Latin words must have become lost to us, or, the one or the other of them, though existent in some extant work, may yet have been overlooked by modern lexicographers. Gothofredus¹⁾ says: *sceleritas dicitur*

¹⁾ Vide Lieuwen's re-edition, 1663, of his celebrated edition of the corpus juris civilis, ad h. l.

ἀρχαῖος; ut malitas, and adduces many analogous formations among which ponderitas has appeared to me the most felicitously approximative one. Bynskershoeck, however, informs us ¹⁾ that several of the oldest editions have „facti celeritatem“, and „fati celeritatem“, and I may incidentally annotate that (vide Dirksen s. v.) celeritas is a pretty frequent vocable in the corpus juris civilis in the meaning of acceleratio. Hugo Grotius, now, without hesitation adopts ²⁾ the last mentioned reading, viz. fati celeritas, as the correct one, and defends it, first of all, philologically by referring us to Tacitus' (vide Annales IV. and VI.) expressions „mortem in se festinavit“, „pretium festinandi“, and, secondly, historico-philosophically, if I may thus express myself, by the remark: „Nullum in ipsa morte sponte quassita scelus agnoscebat Papinianus.“ On which occasion I may mention that Dion Cassius, speaking, in lib. 60, c. 16 about Arria and the imperial ages under Claudius and Nero, expressly informs us that suicide, far from being considered a sceleritas, was deemed an ἀρετή: εἰς τοιαύτην γὰρ τάξιν τὰ πράγματα ἐληλύθει, ὥστε ἀρετὴν νομίζεσθαι τὸ αὐτόχειρα τανέσθαι (in Maji Excerpta Vaticana, p. 207, as quoted by Hermann on p. 1371 of the review mentioned in §. 18). Finally, Wächter (ubi supra, pp. 226, 227) gives the decided preference to the reading „fati celeritatem“ in consequence also of the juridico-logical context, defining it as simply and solely a periphrastic euphemism (vide §. 7) for suicide, so that „obnoxius“ can here mean only *legally prejudicial*, the entire passage under debate becoming thus, at all events, *ethically quite neutral*. Which considerations with their united force induce my humble self to subscribe to Grotius' manner of reading, and Wächter's mode of interpreting, this dictum of Papinian's.

Thus much merely *negatively*. Passing on, however, to *positive* testimonies, there are abundant passages in the Justinian Code (here I will once for all observe that I shall in general quote only such passages as have seemed to me the most conclusive; other less accurately or completely put ones must be interpreted according to the incontestible import of those I shall adduce) which most unequivocally, emphatically, and repeatedly proclaim that sickness, pain, debts, satiety of life, vanity (valetudinis adversae impatientia,

¹⁾ Observationum juris romani libb. VIII, lib. IV, c. 4, pp. 234, 235 of edit. 2, 1739. ²⁾ Florum sparsio ad jus Justinianum, 1643, p. 253.

impatientia alicujus doloris, pudor aeris alieni, taedium vitae, jactatio) as well as derangement, madness (insania, furor, vide §. 13) supply a morally just or legally valid reason for suicide, i. e. that suicide committed on account of the one or the other of those causes — and NB. they are often placed in immediate juxta-position as being the one quite equal to the other — was not, and ought not to be, in any manner penally dealt with, or, viewed as guilty in the eyes of the law. Nay, lest such a string of possible reasons should not be sufficiently lax, indulgent, comprehensive, we find also here and there „for any other cause“ or „any cause at all“ (vel alio modo, aut aliquo casu, where modus is palpably = causa, *aitia*, cf. Wächter, p. 247, Ann. 98, and vide §. 13) superadded.

Some few chief passages in proof. „Si quis autem taedio vitae, vel impatientia doloris alicujus, vel alio modo vitam finierit, successorem habere Divus Antoninus rescripsit.“¹⁾ „Quod si id (i. e. dispatched himself) taedio vitae, aut pudore aeris alieni, vel valetudinis alicujus impatientia admisit: non (i. e. the possessions) inquietabuntur, sed suae successioni (s. suo successori) relinquuntur.“²⁾ „Quod si quis taedio vitae, vel valetudinis adversae impatientia, vel jactationis, ut quidam philosophi (mortem sibi consciverint): in ea causa sunt, ut testamenta eorum valeant.“³⁾

Aye, we are therein assured that even *slaves* possess an inalienable legal right to destroy themselves. „Si ipse servus sese vulneravit, non debet hoc damnum deducere: non magis, quam si se occiderit, vel praecipitaverit: licet enim etiam servis naturaliter in suum corpus saevire.“⁴⁾ And this was, we should think, going as far in the above indicated direction as *Roman* juriconsults could possibly be expected to go. That this is the sense of this much-becommented and variously interpreted passage vide Wächter's acute and clear arguments (ubi supra, pp. 230—239) against the three main different acceptations of it, those of Gothofredus, Crell, and Fabrotus.

To a somewhat altered or modified tone in the legal enunciations about *soldiers*, and the reasons thereof, we will revert by and by; yet also to them what has just been adduced in the main

¹⁾ Digest. lib. 48, tit. 21, §. 4. ²⁾ Dig. lib. 49, tit. 14, lex 45, §. 2. Vide also *Juli Pauli receptae sententiae*, lib. 5, tit. 12, lex 1. ³⁾ Dig. lib. 28, tit. 3, lex 6, §. 7. ⁴⁾ Dig. lib. 15, tit. 1, lex 9, §. 7.

applies. „Quam distinctionem in militis quoque testamento Divus Hadrianus dedit epistola ad Pomponium Falconem: ut, si quidem ob conscientiam delicti militaris mori maluit, irritum sit ejus testamentum: *quod si taedio vitae, vel dolore, valere testamentum*: aut si intestato decessit, cognatis: aut si non sint, legioni ista sint vindicanda.“¹⁾ Here, however, previously our proper enquiry: is, then, suicide never punished by the Justinian Code? Undoubtedly, it is, as we have often already hinted in this §; but, yet not suicide as such, rather only suicide, when presumed or proved to have been employed for an illegal purpose, viz. as a means of escape from the execution of a sentence with which a person already arrested and arraigned was menaced.

1. Fiscally.

If, namely, any person had either been *surprised* over or caught in the act (*deprehensus*), or stood already *arraigned* for (*reus postulatus*, in reatu), any crime (*scelus*), the conviction of or the condemnation for which involved, according to silently assumed practice or actually enunciated law, *forfeiture of property* — i. e. as a concomitant of condemnation to death, transportation, working in the mines, life-long labor in the public works —, and had destroyed himself prior to the impending trial, or, to the giving of judgment: in such a case, but in such a case only, his self-destruction was regarded as an act committed from a bad conscience (*mala conscientia*), i. e. from fear of the issue of the said trial, the verdict of the said sentence, i. e. as an evident, though a silent, admission of his guilt touching the said crime; and, unless some *other* motive, whether a weighty or a trivial one, could be assigned for his suicide as proveably or even probably the true one, *his property was forthwith confiscated*, i. e. that was *legally* done which, as was taken for granted, would have had to be *legally* done, had he not by suicide anticipated the *legal* judicial sentence. Consequently, *not the suicidal act itself* was thus punished, or, rather, was really punished at all, but *only that crime* which was presumed to have originated the suicidal act.

Some few chief passages in proof. „Ergo aut *postulati* esse debent, aut *in scelere deprehensi*, ut, si se interfecerint, bona eorum confiscentur.“²⁾ „Ejus bona, qui sibi mortem conscivit, non ante

¹⁾ Dig. lib. 28, tit. 3, lex 6, §. 7. ²⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 21, lex 3, the first quotation from Papinianus.

ad fiscum coguntur, quam prius constiterit, *cujus criminis gratia* manus sibi intulerit.“¹⁾ „Ut autem Divus Pius rescripsit, ita demum bona ejus, qui *in reatu* mortem sibi conscivit, fisco vindicanda sunt, si *ejus criminis* reus fuit, ut, si damnaretur, *morte aut deportatione adficiendus esset*.“²⁾ „Ergo ita demum dicendum est, bona ejus qui manus sibi intulit, fisco vindicari, si *eo crimine* nexus fuit, ut, si convinceretur, *bonis careat*.“³⁾ „Nam eorum, qui mori magis quam damnari maluerint *ob conscientiam criminis*, testamenta irrita constitutiones (imperial ordonnances) faciunt, licet in civitate decedant.“⁴⁾ „Videri autem et patrem, qui sibi manus intulisset, quod diceretur filium suum occidisse, magis dolore filii amissi mortem sibi arrogasse: et *ideo* bona ejus *non* esse publicanda, Divus Hadrianus rescripsit.“⁵⁾

This last passage contains, it is true, only an individual imperial decision; but, it testifies loudly and clearly how greatly the then Roman laws inclined to lean to the side of non-confiscation in case of suicide, if only some one other reason for the commission of the action could be discovered or urged, some reason exclusive of the „*conscientia (admissi) criminis*.“ Which remark leads us on to a further restriction of the above law.

If, on the one hand, it was thus not deemed necessary to *prove* the suicide's actual guilt, after he had departed under the circumstances previously specified, the corpus juris civilis, on the other hand, permitted the relatives or lawful heirs of such a suicide to have his cause tried themselves, if they were willing to do so; and, if they could and did succeed in *establishing* his innocence, notwithstanding the charge of presumptive guilt which his deed was taken to have preferred against him: then confiscation did *not* take place, but, rather, his will remained valid, or, his property reverted to his rightful heirs.

Passage in proof. „De illo videamus, si quis conscita morte, *nulla justa causa praecedente*, in reatu decesserit: an, *si parati fuerint heredes causam suscipere, et innocentem defunctum ostendere*, audiendi sint: nec prius bona in fiscum cogenda sint, quam si de crimine fuerit probatum: an vero publicanda sunt. Sed Divus Pius Modesto Taurino rescripsit, si parati sint heredes defensiones susci-

¹⁾ Dig. lib. 49, tit. 14, lex 45, §. 2. It is a passage from Paulus. ²⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 21, lex. 3, §. 1. ³⁾ Ibid. §. 3. ⁴⁾ Dig. lib. 28, tit. 3, lex 6, §. 7. ⁵⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 21, lex 3, §. 5.

pere: *non esse bona publicanda, nisi de crimine fuerit probatum.*"¹⁾ — — —

Such being, then, as far as I have been able to learn and to judge, the real state of the *fiscal* law in the *corpus juris civilis* as regards suicide, I will venture to make a few simple and brief general remarks, ere we proceed to the *ritual* features contained in the Justinian Code.

It was, as we saw in §. 34, according to the general spirit also of ancient Greek custom and law that the citizen, as we here likewise find, should have a presumptively or proveably legitimate and (morally, after antique pagan notions) innocent cause or reason for self-destruction; and not a presumptively or proveably unlawful or criminal one. — Supposing, now, property to have become de jure forfeited to the Fiscus by some crime or other, suicide was now no longer, as it formerly had been, to remain a means in the power and will of the individual for a successful rescue of such property; and, as it seems to me, there cannot exist any valid reason for allowing a criminal to paralyze entirely the arm of justice, as far as his property is concerned, by voluntarily hovering away beyond the frontiers of life. Thus much we would say decidedly in favor and defence of the above laws. — But, was it rational or just to take for granted that any person who merely stood arraigned for some heavy misdeed, and voluntarily destroyed himself prior to actual trial and conviction, had really committed suicide from a consciousness of guilt, though no other motive for his action should be discoverable? Doubtless, the English legal axiom which, if I mistake not, considers every one innocent, until tried and convicted, is nobler in the abstract (but, inasmuch as our English law (vide Sect. V) punishes suicide in and by itself, this parallel would, perhaps, not be here quite fair). It is, namely, possible that an innocent person, if of an over-sensitive mind, an exceedingly excitable nervous system, by temperament prone to melancholy, or, by temper rash and haughty, and indignant at being, though transiently, dragged publicly into a false light and position, might become reduced to such despondency or spurred into such desperation as would, considering the then Roman notions of the permissibility and nobleness of suicide, induce him to prefer death by his own hand to the annoyances and igno-

¹⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 21, §. 8.

minies of a public trial with its paraphernalia, and to the subjection to the anticipated partiality of judicial functionaries, and to the exposure to the existent imperfections of a criminal code. And, surely, suchlike might ever and anon have taken place in the *imperial ages* of Rome, when the official wardens of the law were *often* so venal, cowardly, severe, prejudiced, cruel, or impotent opposite to a slavish Senate and a tyrannical Caesar. Let us, by way of exemplifications from modern story, think of Judge Jeffries or the Coup d'Etat in France some few years ago! — In many instances, therefore, greater justice would have, doubtless, lain on the side of even still greater mildness, viz. of giving the suicide invariably the benefit of every possible *doubt*. — Yet, if we take the law we mentioned last into due consideration, both the rationality and the equity of the *corpus juris civilis* in this fiscal matter must, I humbly assume, be admitted.

2. Ritually.

Those, *but they only*, who had presumptively destroyed themselves „*mala conscientia*“ s. „*conscientia criminis capitalis*“, and had not been proved by their relatives not to have done so, were also forbidden to be privately or domestically mourned, i. e. by external marks, e. g. putting on black garments, laying off precious ornaments, abstaining from frequenting public spectacles, etc., though such mourning was in all other cases, time immemorial, a sort of duty on the part of female relatives more especially.

Passage in proof. „*Non solent autem lugeri, ut Neratius (who is said to have lived under Trajan) ait, hostes, vel perduellionis damnati: nec suspendiosi, nec qui manus sibi intulerunt, non taedio vitae, sed mala conscientia.*“¹⁾ Here, again, consequently the mention is not of suicides *as such* who, we are assured in the same breath, might be mourned in the usual solemn manner. The specified suicides were considered as „*infames*“, since the whole *titulus*, in which this passage occurs, treats „*de his, qui notantur infamia.*“ Whether, however, *suspendiosi* are here put separately, so that the meaning is *they under all circumstances*, and the *non taedio* — *mala conscientia* apply only to *nec qui etc.*, I do not feel quite sure (*vide*, however, what was said on this passage already on p. 183 of this §). I rather incline to refer the *non taedio etc.* also to the *suspendiosi*, for the reason there given.

¹⁾ Deg. lib. III, tit. 2, lex 11, §. 3.

More remarkable and startling, however, than the above luctus interdictio is what follows in the identical passage. „Si quis ergo, post hujusmodi exitum mariti, nuptum se collocaverit, infamia notabitur. Notatur etiam, qui eam duxit, sed si sciens: ignorantia enim excusatur non juris, sed facti. Excusatur, qui jussu ejus, in cujus potestate erat, duxerit: et ipse, qui passus est ducere, notatur. Utrumque recte: nam et qui obtemperavit, venia dignus est: et qui passus est ducere, notari ignominia.“ Why thus? Were such espousals to be considered a species of adultery or bigamy, because the former union had not been, in a certain sense, naturally dissolved, and, consequently, not, at it were, really dissolved? But, such hyper-refining would manifestly apply with equal force to every species of suicide without distinction. At all events, howsoever harsh and even unjust such a legal measure may appear, when we consider the extreme laxity into which all matrimonial matters had fallen during the rule of the Pagan Caesars, it again does not touch suicide as *mere* suicide.

Of the non-burial or ignominious burial of suicides *as such* there is nowhere any vestige in the corpus juris civilis; just as little, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is therein aught decreed about even the non-burial or ignominious burial of even those who had destroyed themselves so as to incur confiscation of property. Therefore, the *characteristic new* anti-suicidal element in the Justinian Code, as compared with the laws e. g. under Cicero and Tiberius, is of a pre-eminently fiscal, not a ritual, character, and, ere we conclude this portion of our subject, a merely chronological question may be of some little interest and importance: at what exact period or under which Emperor did the above specified fiscal alteration in Roman legislation take place?

It would appear to be anything but easy to answer this question with accuracy and certainty: thence, it has been answered by different legal and historical writers very differently. Thus, for instance, to fix upon one writer to whose acuteness and trustworthiness on most points of this description we Englishmen are very justly accustomed to attach considerable weight, Gibbon inclines to fix upon Domitian as the originator of the said change, but is not *sure*, and does not support his conjecture by *authorities* of any kind.¹⁾ „The

¹⁾ Decline and Fall, ch. 44 (vide, however, what we shall have to say in Sect. V.).

exquisite avarice and cruelty of Domitian appear to have deprived the unfortunate of this last consolation" (i. e. of killing themselves with impunity), and it was still denied even by the clemency of the Antonines." Others have fixed upon Antoninus Pius; others, again, upon Hadrian: among the latter Wächter and Rein who seem to me, as far as I may be allowed to form an opinion on so critical a question, by far most likely to be in the right.

First of all, no such fiscal law existed under Tiberius, as we learnt from Tacitus and Dion Cassius. Secondly, it did not exist under Nero, as we may gather from an incidental hint in Tacitus.¹⁾ Thirdly, we are not in possession of any intimation of its introduction under the reigns of Nero's successors, viz. — to be silent about the short reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius — Vespasianus, Titus, Domitian, Nerva. Fourthly, we have every reason for assuming that what Tacitus calls "*pretium festinandi*" was still valid and customary under the rule of Trajan; at least, the tone and tenor of the younger Pliny's various narratives of suicides committed under Trajan's reign, some of them cases of juriconsults themselves, convey anything but a hint of this Emperor's having in any manner interfered with the previously existent laws on suicide. Nay, that writer's circumstantial narrative in epistola 9 of lib. III. expressly instructs us that under Trajan the continuing of a suit against one already deceased, upon which procedure, nevertheless, the anti-suicidal fiscal law under mention is essentially based, was *rarely* resorted to, though it would have been legal. Fifthly, nevertheless, the change at issue was introduced by *imperial ordonnances* (constitutiones), as Ulpian expressly informs us in a passage I have quoted in full two or three pages previously. Sixthly, it is certain from the rescript of Hadrianus which I have also given in full *ibid.* (the one referring to a father who, arraigned for having killed his own son, had destroyed himself) that the specified change really did exist at that time. Seventhly, the rescripts of Hadrian, designative of the existence of the law under discussion, are the *earliest* ones occurring in the Pandects. Eighthly, all the passages from juriconsults which imply the existence of the said legal fiscal anti-suicidal innovation, belong to such juriconsults (their names have already occurred to us) as lived and wrote *after* Hadrian, viz. under Septimius Severus, Alexander Se-

¹⁾ Ann. XVI, c. 17; cf. *ibid.* the "*opibus ejus inhians*."

verus etc. Finally, we shall immediately learn *with certainty* that Hadrian took special pains to regulate and define the law in regard to attempted, or consummated, suicide on the part of *soldiers* at all events. And, it may be worthy of note here that Gibbon himself in a far earlier portion of the identical chapter remarks: „Hadrian appears to have been the first who assumed, without disguise, the plenitude of legislative power. And this innovation, so agreeable to his active mind, was countenanced by the patience of the times, and his long absence from the seat of government.“ — If, however, he was in error about Domitian, what he says about the Antonines was, perhaps, somewhat superfluous; for, what Hadrian had fixed on this point Antoninus Pius merely expressly adopted, and *all* his successors simply accepted.

Appendix. On *attempted*, not consummated, suicide.

Prior to the laws contained in the corpus juris civilis, there is not the slightest evidence that attempted suicide was punished by the Romans. Nor was, according to the Justinian Code, the attempt at suicide per se punished at all, i. e. supposing a person to have had a just or non-criminal reason for making such an attempt. Passage in proof. „Sic autem hoc distinguitur, interesse *qua ex causa* quis sibi mortem conscivit: sicuti cum quaeritur, an is, qui sibi manus intulit, et *non perpetravit*, debeat puniri, quasi de se sententiam detulit? nam omnimodo puniendus est, *nisi taedio vitae, vel impatientia alicujus doloris coactus est hoc facere*. Et merito, si sine causa sibi manus intulit, puniendus est: qui enim sibi non pepercit, multo minus alii parcat.“¹⁾

But, it follows pretty naturally, and, indeed, quite necessarily from what we have previously stated, that, if anybody, having been surprised over or arraigned for a capital crime, attempted self-destruction, such attempt, just like the actual accomplishment, could not but be presumed an admission of guilt, so that the punishment for the crime supposed to be thus admitted or confessed was inflicted upon him who had made the attempt. And this, nothing more than this, is the veritable import of the last sentence in the above quotation, though it has by some writers been interpreted into a direct declaration of the criminality of and penal dealing with every suicidal attempt (vide, however, what has been said in §. 6, p. 56).

¹⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 21, lex 3, §. 6.

However, the case of the *soldier*, and of him only, stands out exceptionally and peculiarly as regards Roman legislation on attempted suicide. If he attempted suicide from any motive *disconnected* from his actual profession, he was merely ignominiously dismissed the service; but, if he, without assigning, or pretending to, any motive or reason except *satiety of military servitude*, had attempted self-destruction for the sole purpose and with the sole object of getting rid of the burden of his military duties, he was punished with death.

Passages in proof. „Qui se vulneravit, vel alias mortem sibi conscivit, Imperator Hadrianus rescripsit, ut modus ejus rei statutus sit, ut si impatientia doloris, aut taedio vitae, aut morbo, aut furore, aut pudore mori maluit: non animadvertatur in eum, sed *ignominia mittatur*: si nihil tale praetendat, *capite puniatur*.“¹⁾ „Miles, qui sibi manus intulit, nec factum peregit, nisi impatientia doloris, aut morbi, luctusve alicujus, vel aliâ causâ fecerit, *capite puniendus est*: alias cum *ignominia mittendus est*.“²⁾

The rationale of this specifically *military* legislative procedure was, I think, about as follows. We have seen already in the first Chapter of this Section and in the previous § that, in general, citizenship was regarded in classic antiquity almost as higher than *manship*, if I may thus express myself, and that a human being was deemed, in a certain sense, the property of the State. And now and here we must only add that the soldier was, and is to a certain extent among ourselves now-a-days, more specially viewed as having sold his life by contract to the State: for the State, not for himself, he was to fight; in the service of the State he was to suffer the thread of his life to be torn or gnawed in twain, and was not to presume to cut it asunder of his own accord and free will, particularly not merely for the purpose of casting off the obligations under which his military oath, his great „sacrament“, had laid him. It is true, an attempt at suicide might indicate contempt of life, and, on one hand, the soldier above all others may be said to stand in need of such life-contempt in thought, feeling, action; but, on the other hand, an Army requires all its men, a General must be able to reckon upon the numerical completeness of the forces under his command and at his disposition, and, therefore,

¹⁾ Dig. lib. 49, tit. 16, lex. 6, §. 7 (de re militari). ²⁾ Dig. lib. 48, tit. 20, lex 38, §. 12.

the suicide of a soldier, *from whatsoever motive*, might easily become a *contagious* example to his comrades, and thus prove disorganizing and dangerous. Consequently, dismissal from the service appears a measure both justifiable and expedient. Furthermore, if a soldier made an attempt upon his own life simply and solely in order to rid himself of the duties or the hardships of his military task, his attempt was not only an acted proclamation that he was *not* happy, not only a silent satire upon, or indirect insult to, his profession and position, but, as it were, a rebellious act, an individual mutiny against the contract into which he had either voluntarily entered, or had been forced by „the powers that be“; it was, in point of fact, an attempt at *deserting* — for one cannot kill one's self without deserting —, and upon desertion stood *the punishment of death*. At all events, such a desperate declaration of overwhelming dislike could not but appear to the then-Emperors deserving of punishment in the measure in which it was disheartening or dis-inspiring to the fellow-soldiers.

SECOND SECTION.

BARBARIC PAGANISM.

§. 36. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Thus leaving Paganism in its most intellectual and fascinating forms behind us, we will now glance also, though more rapidly, at some of its ruder and more desolate, often even disgusting, phases, ere we proceed to make acquaintance, systematically and continuously, with documents which will afford to us an opportunity of seeing our way more clearly, and of reasoning to some more thorough purpose.

We have already in §. 14, to which the reader is again referred for sundry items which he might otherwise expect to find in this Section, taken occasion in passing to assert, urge, and draw inferences from, the prevalence of the phenomenon, the frequency of the commission, of suicide among (almost?) every known people and tribe of ancient and modern Heathendom, in (almost?) every shape and nuance of unclassic Paganism, whether civilized or savage. It did not, however, seem then advisable to enter into many specifications, and much less could it be supposed to constitute any portion of our task to assign such *tenets* and *notions* as connected or connect themselves with the fact and act under discussion among such peoples and tribes: which labor the due order of things here prescribes to us. Yet, we shall find ourselves compelled to leave many uncertainties hanging around this part of our Treatise, partly, in consequence of the imperfectness of most of the sources from which our information will have to be extracted, and, partly, from the difficulty I individually have experienced in even falling in with them, let alone, in making aught resembling a critical use of them.

In, perhaps, by far the greater number of instances, the needful or pertinent data for the various *notional* conceptions of Barbaric

Paganism as regards our theme are either entirely lost, or extremely scanty, or not easily procurable. We doubt not, each and all of the so-called barbaric races, both ancient and modern, howsoever light they may weigh in the balance of what is strictly termed mental culture, had, or have, likewise *their* moralists, philosophers, legislators, priests, guides, teachers, i. e. certain orders and classes of men (Druids, Magi, Incas, Soothsayers, or whatsoever strange names, to us more or less unintelligible and often almost unpronounceable, may chance to have attached, or still to attach, to them among the various savage or half-civilized tribes of Asia, Africa, America, Australia, or Europe), whose peculiar privilege and province consisted in enacting, promulgating, upholding religious laws, theorems, systems, traditions, superstitions, customs. But, firstly, the whirlwind of time has rudely swept away those leaves, and the lapse of ages has gradually worn away those stones, upon which their teachings and enactments had been inscribed or engraven. Secondly, oral tradition, flowing on from generation to generation through more or less circuitous and troubled channels, enables us to judge only very imperfectly, by backward-inferences from established practices to notional conceptions, of the precise nature of originally accepted tenets. Thirdly, where a copious native literature is still extant, opinions and precepts are embodied in works with the language of which comparatively few European scholars are familiar, so that we have to rely implicitly upon the correctness and fidelity of the translations and extracts with which they have thought proper to favor us. Fourthly, if we are now and then able to superadd, as supplemental means of information, accounts of occasional travellers, or of professional Missionaries, some caution, I imagine, is needed in accepting it. Mere travellers, when they wander more or less hurriedly through some far-away and little known country, whether from sheer love of novelty and adventure, or bent upon objects of private business and enterprise, or in the service of some scientific society and interest, can rarely be supposed to care over-much about such a comparatively secondary and isolated question as the one occupying us might easily appear to them, even though they should make sundry enquiries into prominent points of religion or policy; and, therefore, such meagre and allusive communications as occasionally occur in their Travels on our special topic must be viewed often rather as anecdotes and surmises than

as well-substantiated facts or clearly defined theories. Nor can this matter be supposed to stand very much better with those Journals and Letters of both Catholic and Protestant Missionaries which constitute so considerable, and in many respects so interesting, instructive, and important a portion of modern literature in regard to various less frequented lands and imperfectly known peoples. On the intelligence and credibility in general of the Catholic Worthies of this description, more especially those of the Order of the Jesuits, with their well-known propagandism in China, Japan, India, and America, the reader may glean many hints from e. g. those impartial biographical and critical notices which Prescott has appended to his Histories of the Conquests of Mexico and Peru. No doubt, their zeal and bigotry sometimes blinded them, and their unfortunate system of accommodation and indulgence in „pious frauds“ occasionally deceived them themselves, and, consequently, made them deceive their readers at home. And, as regards our modern Protestant missionaries, educated at Basel, Berlin, London, etc., whose letters and diaries we find communicated in the various Missionary Magazines and other organs of religious societies, I do not hesitate to affirm that neither the natural abilities nor the acquired culture of very many of them — of course, there are most unquestionable and exemplary individual exceptions — fit them for forming a correct and complete human and scholarlike estimate of those systems of Paganism and phenomena of Idolatry which they have been sent forth to do battle against and to dispel. A sort of romantic crusading piety and enthusiasm is often the very opposite of healthy clear-sightedness, and mere ejaculations of horror over superstitious tenets and idolatrous practices often yield as little genuine intellectual information as mere statistical tables about the numbers of men, women and children who attend at church or school, or even receive baptism and communion, yield genuine spiritual information.

Therefore, though it would have been not only one-sided, but altogether unjustifiable, if I had left any marked phase of unclassic Paganism entirely undiscussed in this humble historico-ethical Treatise, the reader must be fully prepared for finding in the present Section much of what is more or less fragmentical and uncertain. Yet, I shall endeavor rather to do justice to what I introduce than to introduce what I should be less able to do justice to, i. e. to give rather *multum* than *multa*. At the same time, however, I am

quite ready to admit that a wider range of reading on my own part in regard to this department of my subject would, doubtless, have rendered the gaps fewer, and the short-comings less perceptible, than they will prove to be.

But, ere we enter upon our rapid, though tedious, circumnavigation, I will direct attention to one peculiar distinction and essential difference between classical pagan moral philosophy and many of those barbaric religious systems, if systems they can be called, which will in this Section present themselves to our notice. Whereas, namely, the Greek and Roman writers viewed suicide at the utmost as a *human right*, an undoubted privilege by the using of which the ills and discomforts of the present life might be escaped from, a decorous means of self-deliverance from temporal evils, a deed of philosophical heroism or physical nerve which the Divinity might be presumed to sanction, and Reason be affirmed even to command: suicide, on the contrary, assumed, and in part still assumes, under the teaching of sundry barbaric creeds the developed character of a *religious rite*, a path leading on to greater extra-terrestrial bliss, a deed unto which a sure divine recompense is vouchsafed in a future state of existence, a thing especially well-pleasing and even meritorious according to the estimate of the Godhead, and as such not only permitted and vindicated, but even promulgated and prescribed.

§. 37. PEOPLES IN ASIA.

I. The ancient Persians.

The reader may remember that in the previous Section (vide pp. 48—50 of §. 25) we had to speak of a certain Pamphylian (this word = all tribes or men, is already etymologically somewhat vague) Er whom Plato (mythically) introduces into his *Politia* as testifying, *apparently* at least, about the punishment of suicide in a future world. Among the various surmises, now, touching the probable personality of the said revelator, there exists one which identifies him with the ancient Persian founder of religion and law-giver, Zerdutsch, Zarathustro, Zoroaster.¹⁾ Recently the acute Prof.

¹⁾ Vide Kleuker's *Anhang zum Zend-Avesta*, B. I, Th. I, p. 371, and B. II, pp. 11, 12 with the notes, where this conjecture is traced as far back as Clemens Alexandrinus.

Kortüm¹⁾ has without any hesitation adopted it, and endeavored to support it by *etymological* analogy. He, namely, considers *Er* to hang together with *Iran*, the well-known ancient name of Persia or, at least, of a part thereof (according to Justinus, *Ariana* was = Persia, and *Aria* the appellation of a particular Persian province, whereas Herodot, lib. VII, c. 62, calls the *Medes* specifically *Arians*; and some of the interpreters of this last passage incline to assume that the entire Zend-people as such bore the said name), *Arterland*, *Eeris* meaning the faithful, the honorable (compare, indeed, the German *Ehre*, *hehr* in this respect), so that *Er* would signify merely the *man of Iran*, and thence he calls the myth at issue right out „*Mythos des Iraners Zoroaster*.“ Leaving, however, this ingenious conjecture to its own merits, we pass on to observe that in reference to Phaedo also ancient Greek anti-suicidal teaching has been placed in a still more direct connexion with Zoroasterism, viz. in the following manner.

Olympiodor (vide §. 32) had declared the *Aporreta*, of which Sokrates had made mention, to be reducible to Orphic teachings, and had expounded, in an unfathomably absurd-fashion, that, according to Orpheus, there were four successive realms, that of Uranus, Kronos, Jupiter and Bacchus, which respectively symbolized four stages of religious or moral progress: the theoretic, cathartic, politic and ethic virtues. However, he does not refer his readers to Zoroaster on this occasion, though he does so in various other parts of his commentary.²⁾ But Marsilius Ficinus, whilst also tracing the anti-suicidal opinions of Philolaos and Sokrates to Orphism, proceeds to say: „Plotinus follows these Pythagorean and Platonic mysteries, commences with a *Zoroastrian passage* (*primam clausulam texens carmine Zoroastri*), and argues as follows.“ Judging, now, from the entire context, the said Zoroastrian passage must have been something to the effect that „man is not to compel the soul to emigrate out of the body.“ And, indeed, on turning to those strange productions which have reached us under the title of „chaldaic oracles of Zoroaster“, or „magica oracula“, we find in the 10th section which treats of *ψυχή, σώμα, ἀνθρώπος* those very words:³⁾

¹⁾ *Geſchichte Griechenlands*, 1854, B. I, pp. 276 and 294, Anm., and B. II, p. 281. ²⁾ Vide Finckh l. c. p. 223 s. v. λόγιον. ³⁾ Lines 274—276 in the edition given by Joannes Clericus in his *Opera Philosophica*, edit. 1726, T. II. And vide his notae, p. 349.

Μὴ πνεῦμα μάλυνος, μήτε βαθύνος τὸ ἐπάπειρον,
Μὴ ἐξάξῃς, ἵνα μὴ ἐξιούσα ἔχῃ τι.
Βίη ὅτι σῶμα λιπόντων ψυχὰι καθαρώταται.

Clericus, in his notes as referred to at the foot of page 5, says in reference to these lines what follows. „Pletho et Psellus (these, by the by, were two Greeks who in the 12th and 13th centuries penned commentaries on the Oracula Chaldaica, which commentaries I have never seen, but with which, since e. g. Pletho had as one of the Greek fugitives found an asylum in North Italy, Ficinus was doubtless perfectly familiar) hunc et sequentem versum explicant de corpore, cui ante fatum valedici nolebant Chaldaei, uti nec Platonici. Βίη, nempe, vi *aliena*, nam sibi vim inferre vetabant Platonici post Chaldaeos, ut adparet ex antecedentibus versibus.“ Having stated this much historically, we merely make three passing remarks. In the first place, there can, I presume, be no doubt at all about the fact that these same Oracles which bear the name of Zoroaster are of a much later age than Zoroaster's time, i. e. the 6th or 5th cent. a. C., and are, in point of fact, a mere fabrication, of Platonic-Greek origin, I presume.¹⁾ In the second place, in the writings of classical antiquity, as everybody must know who has paid any attention to the matter, such strange and puzzling confusions and contradictions occur about Zoroaster that even the mere *chronological* divergences would seem to force upon us the conclusion that Greek and Roman authors really speak of at the least *two* distinctly different personages under one and the same name. And, finally, whether or not there be any truth in ancient accounts about a Zoroaster's having contributed some of the elements to Pythagoras' anti-suicidal teachings, it is certain, as I can testify after a careful perusal of Kleuker's re-translation of Anquetil du Perron's French version of the Zend-Avesta, that in it aught even resembling an interdiction of self-destruction would be sought for in vain, unless one should have inclined to Platonize or Gnosticize or Evangelize some particular of the Zoroastrian ethical trilogy (purity in thought, word and deed) after a most extraordinary fashion which has remained unknown to me.

¹⁾ Cf. Creuzer's notes in his Plotinus, vol. III, p. 81, where observe the reiterated cautious „posset.“ He had before him Gale's edit. which I have not been able to inspect.

Therefore, gladly quitting such dark ground, we will proceed to notice sundry other ancient communications which are in an historical point of view somewhat interesting, though they should fail to yield us any real light.

In the extant portions of the detailed and probably somewhat novelistic account which, presumptively in the 1st cent. p. C., Curtius penned of the exploits of Alexander the Great, the said Latin historian lets the Persian Satrap Nabarzanes address Darius thus.¹⁾ „Fortium virorum est, magis mortem contemnere, quam odisse vitam. Saepe taedio laboris ad vilitatem sui compelluntur *ignavi*: at nihil virtus inexpertum omittit. Itaque ultimum omnium mors est, ad quam non pigre ire satis est.“ Which same speech wears a sort of anti-suicidal complexion. Indeed, it is extremely like what we have found e. g. in the Nicomachean Ethics and in Euripides' Herakles. Therefore, since we cannot but take for granted that Curtius had no very accurate means of learning what was spoken on the said occasion, but simply let Nabarzanes deliver a sentiment which he, Curtius, considered more or less appropriate to the situation he was depicting, and inasmuch as the classical writers in general were apt to carry over certain classical notions into the religious system of the Persians,²⁾ I do not hesitate to regard the said speech as purely Curtian, and not Persian at all. Nor need we by any means assume even that Curtius himself therefore entertained anti-suicidal opinions. Florus, for instance, about in the same breath³⁾ utters his „quod magnae indolis signum est, *sperare semper*“ and his pro-suicidal „ut sapiente dignum erat“ and „quod miserrimum est fortibus viris.“ Again, according to Curtius,⁴⁾ Darius said to his faithful servant Bubaces what follows. „Ego hic legem fati mei expecto. Forsitan mireris, quod vitam non finiam: alieno *scelere*, quam *meo*, mori malo.“ And it is on the strength of this not a little platitudinarian dictum that Hugo Grotius would fain (vide his de jure belli ac pacis, l. c.) have us believe that the ancient Persians disapproved of suicide. *Nec aliena* (he had just quoted an anti-suicidal passage of Megasthenes' about the Brachmans) *Persarum*, ut videtur sententia, quorum rex Darius apud Curtium.“ No

¹⁾ Lib. V, c. 26 in Müzzell's edit. ²⁾ Cf. e. g. what Herodot., lib. VII, c. 10 and c. 46, lets the Persian Artabanus say to Xerxes. ³⁾ Lib. IV, c. 8, §§. 3, 4, with the notes of Gruterius and Freinsheim, and cf. lib. IV, c. 2, §. 70. ⁴⁾ Lib. V, c. 33.

doubt, the issue of the unfortunate monarch's career might afford some countenance to the possibility of his having harbored or uttered some such sentiment; but even granting this, I should venture to doubt, whether Curtius himself intended the word „scelus“ to be here understood in a pregnantly ethical force = our word *crime*, which signification it, undoubtedly, ordinarily possesses. Reverting to „scelere alieno“ in a passage from Florus which I quoted already on p. 120 of §. 10, we gain some support for this hypothesis. No doubt, Florus did not regard the deadly aid of those men who slew Cassius and Brutus as a morally *criminal* act, but rather in consonance with the views prevalent among the Romans in his time, as a friendly, timely, meritorious service; and, moreover, as we have just seen, Florus was anything but a disapprover of suicide as such. Wherefore, Dukerus¹⁾ not inaptly, but still too strongly, paraphrased scelus as there employed by „triste ac detestabile ministerium aliorum: quod quamquam imperatum, tamen scelus videri poterat iis, quibus imperabatur.“ Scelus seems to me there and here employed as a sort of *vox media*, a morally neutral term = e. g. triste officium; at least, I find warrant for this assumption in a passage of one of the philosopher Seneca's tragedies.²⁾ Philoktetes, whilst recounting Hercules' last request to him that he should set fire to the pile of wood on which the Alcide was resolved to burn himself to death, lets Hercules ask his wavering and dilatory companion reproachfully thus:

„Quid dextra tremuit? num manus pavidæ impium
Scelus refugit?“

No doubt, however, Seneca himself viewed, and meant Hercules to view, the entire affair of suicide and aid to suicide as the very opposite to aught morally *culpable* (vide §. 18). — Nor, may it be altogether irrelevant here to intercalate that Plutarch,³⁾ after having related how Themistokles had poisoned himself at Magnesia, expressly adds that the Persian king Artaxerxes is said, when he learnt the cause and *manner* of his death, to have *admired* the man all the more.

¹⁾ Vide his lengthy note in vol. II, p. 754 of his edit. of Florus, 1744.

²⁾ Hercules Octaeus, act V, lines 1720, 1721. Nor do the emendations of these lines which have been proposed, vide Bothe's edition, 1822, p. 319, alter what we have said about this word, viz. manus pavidæ pium scelus refugunt, and pium = officiosum. ³⁾ Life of Themistokles, c. 31.

In a doctrinal point of view I have nothing further to communicate, but will now cast a quick glance at what is known to us touching practice among the ancient Persians.

In the 4th cent. a. C., Ariaspes, son of Artaxerxes, poisoned himself, because he had been led to believe that his father had determined to execute him.¹⁾ Boges, a Persiap captain under Xerxes, rather than capitulate and appear cowardly, burnt himself and his family in a fortress besieged by the Greeks, when there were no more supplies left; and the mild, simple old Greek historian repeatedly assures us that both Xerxes and the Persians held his memory on this account in extreme reverence.²⁾ Prexaspes, that honorable Persian who had endeavored to undeceive his countrymen about the Pseudo-Smerdes, hurled himself, fearing the revenge of the Magi, down from a tower.³⁾ Sisygambis, the mother of Darius, died a voluntary death after she had been informed of the decease of Alexander who had treated her so generously during her captivity.⁴⁾

— Such are a few records of ancient days; taking, however, a leap into the middle of the 6th cent. of our era, a somewhat remarkable instance presents itself to us, and the credibility of the narrative can scarcely be called into question.⁵⁾ Bessas, one of Justinian's generals, besieged a portion of the army of the Persian monarch Chosroes in the fortress of Petra, and, he having taken the fortress, 700 Persians withdrew themselves into the mountain-fastness, and there again prepared for resistance. Bessas, anxious for their preservation, commissioned one of his Roman soldiers to approach them, and endeavor to induce them to prefer a surrender on lenient conditions to a certain, merely desperate, death. Here Anglicé a few of the anti-suicidal passages which occur in the said soldier's somewhat lengthy oration. „As it is the wont of the Romans, who are Christians, we have compassion with you, although you seclude yourselves from us; we will spare you who seek death, and wish to show you who manifest indifference and coolness to life, mercy. Therefore, do not destroy yourselves, since you are at liberty to preserve your lives. No happiness arises from remaining with predilection in terrors, if therefrom not the

¹⁾ Plutarch, life of Artaxerxes, c. 30. ²⁾ Herod. lib. VII, c. 107. ³⁾ Ibid. lib. III, c. 75. ⁴⁾ Justinus, lib. XIII, c. 1, and cf. Curtius X, 5. ⁵⁾ Procopius, de bello Gothico, lib. IV, c. 12, pp. 518—520 in vol. II. of Dindorf's edit.

slightest utility ensue; for, that is not showing one's valor, but seeking death. He is a noble-minded man who endures the most terrible with constancy, if he expect an advantage therefrom. For, men do not accord praise to a voluntary death, when a stronger hope exists than the danger which causes it; it is then rather a violent, useless destruction and an over-hasty folly (οὐ γὰρ ἐπαινοῦσι τὴν ἐκούσιον τελευτὴν ἄνθρωποι, ἔνθα δὴ τις ἐπὶ κείνῳ κρείσσων τῇ κατ' αὐτὴν κινδύνῳ ἔλπις, ἀλλὰ βίαιος μὲν καταστροφὴ ἄχρηστος καὶ ἄνοια προπετής). Likewise this point you must take into consideration: that you must not draw upon yourselves the appearance of sinning against God (τὸ θεῖον). For, if He, O men, had been willing to destroy you, He would, as I believe, not have delivered you up to those who wish to preserve your lives." — However (thus our historian continues), they would not even receive with their ears these representations, but played the part of such as were hard of hearing, and did as if they understood nothing of them. — The result, then, was that the Romans set fire to the mountain-fastness, and the 700 Persians, without attempting either resistance or deliverance, deliberately cast themselves into the flames. —

What the views on our topic may be which the present Guebres or Parsees, the supposed descendants of the ancient Fire-Worshippers, entertain, I have not had any means of ascertaining. No doubt, however, their ancestral faith has been more or less modified by the influences of Hindooism, among the adherents of which they more especially dwell. — And as to the modern Persians, after their compulsory adoption of Muhammadanism, they will find a place in the next Section, which treats of the Religion of the Crescent, wherefore I will here only remark that in e. g. Fraser's „descriptive and historical account of Persia“ I have not found mention made of any *signal* suicidal act.

II. The Hindoos.

Here a far vaster field opens itself for review, and one for the exploration of which much ampler materials are at our bidding.

Until the chivalrously ambitious Macedonian Conqueror had led his unsubdued phalanxes into those populous and fertile regions which the Indus and its tributaries water, those lands had enacted a part only in the fabulous records of classical mythology, e. g. in connexion with Dionysos. And, though posterity had to be a long time grateful for such accounts as Alexander and his Captains,

themselves unacquainted with the languages of the various districts through which their path led, gleaned by the aid of interpreters, the said accounts could not but be more or less inaccurate and deceptive. No feature, now, about remote India in those remote ages would seem to have attracted their notice, partly, exciting their wonder, partly, fettering their admiration, more strongly than that the Bramins, time immemorial, frequently committed suicide from all sorts of motives, in consonance with their religious principles or, at all events, in pursuance of their ancestral customs. The pages of the later Greek and Latin writers, e. g. Strabo, Plutarch, the elder Pliny, Curtius, bear ample testimony to this fact, and even Josephus (*de bello Jud.* VII, c. 8, §. 7) and Porphyrius (*de abstinencia*, lib. IV, c. 18) have not failed to notice it; and with e. g. Cicero, Diodorus Sikulus, Aelian, Arrian, Valerius Maximus the two specific instances of Kalanus, in the time of Alexander the Great, and Zarnanochagas, under the reign of Augustus, are especially favorite stories. (Their real Indian names I have mentioned in §. 28 which, according to Bohlen,¹⁾ signify respectively Felix and Sanctus, and, according to Plutarch,²⁾ the name of Kalanus was given by the Greeks, because the said personage was wont to salute them with the word kale.

Merely stating that the said Greek and Roman communications, though divergent on various minor points, are uniform in representing that suicide was regarded and practised in ancient India as a religious and philosophical rite and custom, we, hastening past by the middle ages, land in those comparatively modern days, when European commerce, conquest, curiosity began to extend themselves to further India, when, by means both foul and fair, the British Empire more especially acquired the longer the more triumphant sway and uncheckable influence throughout the length and breadth of yon immense territory, and when dissertations on the tenets of Hindoo religion, the speculations of Hindoo philosophy, the beauties of Hindoo poetry, the institutes of Hindoo law etc., and complete or partial translations of Hindoo writings made their way into general European literature, and diffused at least some genuine and trust-worthy knowledge of Hindoo habits, manners, doctrines, insti-

¹⁾ *Das alte Indien*, pp. 288, 289. ²⁾ *Life of Alexander*, c. 65, and cf. c. 69.

tutions even among those who have no vocation to occupy themselves specially with Sanskrit studies, and no ability to exercise independent criticism in regard to them: to which same class of mere general readers in this difficult, but interesting, province of learned enquiry I myself, of course, belong, since even the very letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are unknown to me.

Ere, however, such scholars as Jones and Colebrooke had exerted themselves, and under the immediate auspices of the British Government „the Asiatic Researches“ etc. were published, the well-known M. Sainte-Croix in the last half of the 18th cent. translated into his native idiom a work called *Ezour-Vedam*, supposing it to be an *ancient* Indian book on Religion and Ethics; and therein,¹⁾ after a lengthy dissertation on the value of the body, the instinct of self-preservation, the sinfulness of over-strained fasting, the following words incidentally occur: „suicide has always been esteemed one of the greatest crimes.“ And in a subsequent mere compilation of his own, which still has in part its root in the said *Ezour-Vedam*, Ith informs us²⁾ that „the Hindoos of our times believe that it is permitted to inflict violence upon one's self in certain holy cities, whereas it would be a crime in every other locality.“ It is a pity; but well-qualified men³⁾ instruct us that the *Ezour-Vedam* itself is altogether *spurious*, a mere fabrication!

Proceeding, then, to Colebrooke's essay „on the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, and the Bramins especially“, he says briefly what follows:⁴⁾ „Obsequies for suicides are forbidden“, remarking, however, in the very same breath „a monument is always erected on the spot where any person had died a legal voluntary death.“ From which last statement we learn that there is a species of suicide among the Hindoos which is *legal*, and Colebrooke himself makes us *ibid.* acquainted with *three* legal causes or modes of suicide.

1. A story being told in the poem *Raghavansa* of parents who had destroyed themselves from grief for the loss of their son, the Scholiast quotes a text of law to prove that in such cases suicide is legal.

¹⁾ Buch IV, Kap. 4 in Ith's German version thereof, published anno 1779. The French original I have not seen. Ith believed still as Sainte-Croix had done. ²⁾ *Ettelrehr der Braminen oder Religion der Indier*, 1794, Th. II, p. 34, Anm. ³⁾ Vide Adelung's sketch of Sanskrit literature, p. 76 of Talbot's translation. ⁴⁾ *Asiatic researches*, vol. VII, p. 256 ff. He promised to resume this enquiry on a later occasion; but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, his good intention was left unexecuted.

2. It is legal suicide, instances of which are anything but infrequent, if persons afflicted with loathsome and incurable diseases, cause themselves to be buried alive.

3. Situate among the mountains between the rivers Tapti and Nermada there is a precipice called Calabhairava, near which spot a fair is held annually at the commencement of spring; and during each fair usually eight or ten persons, belonging to the lowest tribes of the inhabitants of Berar and Gondwana, fling themselves from the said precipice, they having vowed suicide in return for boons solicited from idols; and such suicidal fulfilment of a suicidal vow, crowned with success, is legal.

This is the substance of what Colebrooke communicates in the above treatise. But, surely, if we apply to other sources of information which would seem entitled to an equal amount of credence, the said catalogue might be easily doubled. For instance. In the Institutes of the Emperor Akber,¹⁾ a Persian work of the 16th century, we are assured that the Hindoos reckon the Karshagni, i. e. a species of expiatory self-conflagration by dint of a process too minutious as well as too unsavory to be here dwelt upon, but which is supposed to consume quickly „both sin and sinner“, among the *meritorious* kinds of suicide. It was this mode of voluntary exit which, I remember having somewhere read, the celebrated thinker and writer Sankaracharya, who in the 10th century of our era had signalized himself as a most cruel persecutor of the Jainas (vide §. 48), chose. — Ibn Batuta, a distinguished Arabic traveller in the 14th century, narrates²⁾ that „some of the Hindoos drown themselves in the river Ganges, to which they perform pilgrimages, and into which they pour the ashes of those who have been burnt; and that, when any one intends to drown himself, he opens his mind on the subject to one of his companions and says: you are not to suppose that I do this for the sake of anything worldly; my only motive is to draw near to Kisai, which is the name of God with them; and that, when he is drowned, they draw him out of the water, burn the body, and pour the ashes into the Ganges.“ — Nay, in the Ayeen Akbery we read distinctly that it is a legal mode of suicide to enter the water at the junction of the Ganges and the

¹⁾ Or, the Ayeen Akbery, vol. II, pp. 531, 532 of Gladwin's translation.

²⁾ Vide p. 109 ff. of Samuel Lee's translation of his travels from the abridged manuscript copies.

sea, there to pray and confess one's sins, until alligators devour the penitent; or, to cut one's throat at Allahabad, where there is a junction of the Ganges and the Jumna (and, according to Hindoo belief, of the Sumuswatee also); or, —, or, etc. — for one tires and sickens of enumeration. — Then, finally, we cannot fail to remember¹⁾ that matter of the annual festive procession of the image of Jaggernaut, a deity concerning whose exact position and functions in the Pantheon of Hindooism I have met with very discrepant accounts, but whose chief temple is said to be in the province of Orixia in the Carneatic. The said image, described to us as an irregular pyramidal stone of about four or five hundred weight, with two rich diamonds near the top to represent the eyes, the nose and the mouth being painted with vermillion, is carried on a car, and lo! when year by year not a few individuals cast themselves beneath its wheels, and are literally crushed to pieces, in Orixia itself sometimes no fewer than 100, and in many other places in Bengal proportionately large numbers, such a death is, according to the Shastrûs, a legal and meritorious form of religious suicide, and the bodies of the devoted enthusiasts are burnt, and the ashes thereof preserved as holy relics.

Indeed, the difficulty would seem to me to be rather in discovering and fixing what sort of suicide is, according to the Braminical doctrines, *illegal*, and, consequently, sinful! And, still greater is the difficulty of believing that, nevertheless, a *divine absolute prohibition of suicide on pain of everlasting doom* is contained in the earliest Gentoo Shastah, which is affirmed to be as ancient as any religious document whatsoever. In the said work,²⁾ namely, the Almighty Being, prescient of everything except the use which the rational free agents of his creation will make of their liberty, is represented as directing Bramah, his prophet, to communicate on earth, among other things, what follows. „The mortal forms where-with I shall encompass the delinquent Debtah are the work of my hand, they shall not be destroyed, but left to their natural decay: therefore, whichever of the Debtah shall by designed violence bring

¹⁾ Vide Ward's account of the writings, religion and manners of the Hindoos, 1811, vol. II, pp. 571, 572. ²⁾ Holwell, interesting historical events relative to the provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan, 1767, part II, pp. 51, 52, and p. 76. Vide for the explanation of the Hindoo terms *ibid.* pp. 35, 51, 63, 8, 44, 48, 71.

about the dissolution of the mortal forms; animated by their delinquent brethren, thou, Sieb, shalt plunge the offending spirit into the Onderah for a space, and he shall be doomed to pass again the eighty nine transmigrations, whatsoever stage he may have arrived to, at the time of such his offence. But whosoever of the delinquent Debtah shall dare to free himself by violence from the mortal form, wherewith I shall enclose him, thou, O Sieb, shalt plunge him into Onderah for ever. He shall not again have the benefit of the fifteen Boboons of purgation, probation, and purification.“ — Nay, in this wondrously sublime ancient writing even longevity is represented as a divine boon, and for reasons both solemn and significant. „The great age of man, when it is accompanied with the enjoyments of his faculties and understanding, is pronounced by the Bramins to be the greatest blessing God can bestow upon this mortal state, as thereby the term of the spirit's probation is prolonged; adding that the limited space of one hundred years, decreed by God in the present Kolee Joque, is full short for the works of repentance and goodness, and that when the life and understanding are preserved beyond that limited term, it ought to be deemed a signal mark of God's special grace and favor.“

NB. Debtah, angels in general; here, however, angelic beings in their eighth region of probation and purification, viz. on earth, in their last transmigration, i. e. that of man, or mhurd, from murto, matter, earth: the souls, or spirits, which animate every mortal form, are delinquent angels in a state of punishment for a lapse from innocence, in a pre-existent state. Sieb, the third principal angel, whose name signifies, literally destroyer, avenger, punisher (We now generally spell it Schiva, I believe). Onderah, intense darkness, from onder, dark, the place of eternal punishment. Boboons, regions or planeta. Kolee Joque, age of impurity.

We will now open the pages of the Institutes of Menu,¹⁾ one of the oldest religious and civil law-books of the Hindoos, said to have been composed about 1000 years a. C., and one of the self-proposed tasks of which is „the manner, primevally settled, of performing obsequies.“ Therein, then, we read. „For those, whose

¹⁾ As translated by Sir William Jones, and re-edited by Haughton, 1825. For the following quotations and references vide vol. II, p. 157, chapt. V, §. 89, ch. I, §. 112, VI, §. 31, IX, §. 323, XI, §. 92, VI, §. 45.

fathers were of a lower class than their mothers, for those who wear a dress of religion unauthorized by the Véda, and for those who *illegally* (this last word is not in Menu's text, but is a gloss of the celebrated commentator Cullu'ca Bhatta) kill themselves, the ceremony of giving funeral water is forbidden by law." This juxtaposition of suicide with lots of other apparently insignificant matters, speaking ethically, does not seem to brand it as criminal to any very great extent. Indeed, sundry other passages appear to convey plain intimations that several sorts of suicide, e. g. self-starvation in case of incurable disease, are advised, if not enjoined. But, again, therewith the following commandment to a Bráhmén in the condition of a Sannyási strangely clashes. „Let him not wish for death; let him not wish for life; let him expect his appointed time, as a hired servant expects his wages." — And Ward (l. c. vol. III, p. 458, and vol. I, pp. 434, 435) assures us, but without referring to any authorities, that the bramhûns have laid it down that it is a crime in a brahmun to put an end to his own existence, though they declare that a shoodru will obtain heaven by the perpetration of sundry kinds of superstitious suicide; and also that, if a person be prevented from committing self-murder, he must perform a sort of atoning penance (pray-uschchittu), as also a person who weeps for the death of a self-murderer, and that nobody must burn the body of a self-murderer without first performing some sort of penance in his name. —

In such fashion and to such an extent obscure, entangled, self-contradictory is whatsoever my reading has placed before me touching what we Europeans from our Christian standing-point cannot but call *veritable suicide*, by whatever other and different name the Hindoos themselves may think proper to designate the one or the other of the acts and usages that have presented themselves to our notice. Criticism, in our modern Occidental sense of the term, can scarcely be presumed a likely talent or exertion of the Hindoos themselves in regard to such a point; and, as far as I am able to divine, even the most erudite and accurate Sanskrit scholar in Europe would have to despair of arriving at aught better than merely the most probable probability on several of the above items. I myself, of course, could only extract from, collate and benote what others had collected, translated, or narrated. — But, I should most certainly do very imperfect justice to my modest historical task, were I to bring

the question of suicide, religious or irreligious, under the influence of Brachmanism, to a close, without having dwelt with special interest on that custom, most selfish, barbarous, unnatural on man's part, and most mournful, superstitious, tender as far as woman is concerned, which is but too well known to all of us under the name of *Sutteeism*, though comparatively few among us may have taken the trouble to enquire into its peculiar bearings upon Hindooism in general.

Suttee, sutee, suttī, satti, sati, sadhwee — thus various are the spellings I have found of this word — is very differently rendered by different European Sanskrit scholars, e. g. locally as „the highest sphere“ (Halhed), as abstract noun „truth“, „goodness“ (Holwell), as personal noun „saint“ (Lee), as adjective of general moral import or laudation „pure“, „virtuous“ (Bohlen). Nor were my doubts about the exact form and genuine meaning of this term removed, until I, when perusing the English version of the Institutes of Menu, met with the following passage. „While she, who slights not her lord, but keeps her mind, speech, and body devoted to him, attains his heavenly mansion, and by good men is called *sādhvī*, or (Calluca's gloss) *virtuous*“ (ch. VI, §. 165). Surmising that I had in this passage our very word before me, I requested a gentleman who had in his possession a copy of Wilson's Sanskrit and English Dictionary to refer to it for me under the radix of *sādhvī*, whereupon he kindly communicated to me the following lexicographic particulars: *sādhū*, m. f. n. 1) pleasing, beautiful; 2) well-born; 3) right, fit; 4) good, virtuous, pious; *sādhvī*, f. a virtuous wife. — *Sat*, m. f. n. 1) true; 2) good, virtuous; *sati*, f., a *virtuous wife*; in ordinary use applied especially to *the wife who burns herself with her husband's corpse*. — Consequently, there is etymologically nothing specific or mystic about this word, nor does it originally designate either the general rite or the individual act of widow-burning which latter rather would seem¹⁾ to be called simply *Saha-gamana*, i. e. accompanying her husband's corpse. Therefore, the properest form would be *Sati*, not *Suttee*, and the fullest definition of a *Sati* about thus: a virtuous or chaste or

¹⁾ Vide Quarterly Review, vol. 89, 1851, p. 260 of the article on the third volume of Wilson's History of British India, in a casual note, with reference to Wilson himself as authority, vol. III, p. 265. Wilson's own work is not at this moment within my reach.

faithful woman, who gives the greatest proof of her virtue, chastity, fidelity or fealty by burning herself at her husband's death along with his corpse.

A second point on which we would desire to gain clearness is the origin or cause of the said rite in Hindooism, the antiquity of it, the authority for it. However, before entering upon these questions, I will take the liberty of drawing the reader's attention to something *kindred* among various other both ancient and modern gentile peoples; for, such parallels may serve to widen our sphere of observation and to render our eye clearer for seeing into the real nature of the incontestably horrible, but only apparently anomalous, phenomenon which is now occupying us.

Among the *Aethiopians*,¹⁾ when the king died, his nearest relatives were obliged to die with him; and it was considered honorable and a proof of true friendship, if his friends died voluntarily on the same occasion. — Whenever a *Herulian* man died,²⁾ his wife, if she would prove her virtue and transmit glory, was obliged to hang herself not long afterwards near the grave of her husband. If she did not act thus, the consequence for her was that she henceforward was no longer esteemed, but became a cause of offence to the relatives. — Among the *Ephthalites* or *White Huns*,³⁾ it was the custom for the rich to attach to themselves twenty or more friends who constituted their constant table-companions, and shared in all their possessions. If, then, such a person who had gained friends died, custom demanded that these men should be led off alive into the grave with him. — Among the *Scythians*,⁴⁾ when a king died, one of his concubines, his cupbearer, his cook, his master of the horse, his chamberlain, and his messenger were interred along with him, as were likewise horses, golden cups, etc. And among one of the *Thracian*⁵⁾ tribes, each man having many wives, when one of the men died, his wives contended violently, and also his friends zealously debated, which of the wives was loved best by the man. She, then, to whom the palm was awarded above all the others, was slaughtered by her nearest relatives over his grave, men and women singing laudations on her, and then she

¹⁾ Strabo, lib. XVII, c. 2, and Diod. Sik. III, c. 7. ²⁾ Procopius, de bello Gothico, lib. II, c. 14. ³⁾ Procopius, de bello Persico, lib. I, c. 3. ⁴⁾ Herod. lib. IV, c. 71. ⁵⁾ Herod. lib. V, c. 5.

was buried with him. But the other women were exceeding sad; for it was to them the greatest disgrace. — Among the *ancient Gauls*,¹⁾ the befriended fellow-warriors, called *Soldurii*, died voluntarily, whenever the head of the warrior-covenant himself perished. — Among the *Celtiberians*,²⁾ it was considered wrong to survive a battle in which any person had fallen for whose preservation they had devoted themselves, and, generally speaking, many shield-bearers and friends thus devoted themselves (which act of self-dedication or self-sacrifice, by the by, Plutarch calls *kataspēsis*, i. e. libation, probably because the pouring out of some sacrificial fluid accompanied it) to their Captain or Chieftain. — Among the *ancient Scandinavians*,³⁾ wives occasionally slew themselves on the graves of their husbands, and servants frequently on those of their masters; and something similar prevailed also among the *Celts*.⁴⁾ — Among the *ancient Peruvians*⁵⁾ and *Mexicans*,⁶⁾ the women were obliged to let themselves be buried along with their husbands, if the latter belonged to the higher castes. — Also anciently — for in later times this law was repealed — among the *Chinese*,⁷⁾ the relatives were compelled to destroy themselves upon the grave of the Emperor. — Finally, on the Fiji islands in *Polynesia*,⁸⁾ several women voluntarily sacrifice themselves at the death of a chieftain, in order to accompany his soul on its long journey into the invisible world.

These numerous facts I have carefully extracted from the sources mentioned in the notes; and it cannot prove difficult to divine the notion or feeling which gave birth to them collectively. Either, for instance, that which a man had loved best on earth was apportioned to him in death by way of relieving the solitude of his pilgrimage; or, that which is noblest in creation, a living human being, was used to compose an honorable funeral sacrifice; or, a vow of brotherhood was thus faithfully fulfilled; or, intense grief by this act manifested that natural affection would not, or could not, survive what had been and still remained its legitimate object.

And, as we must assume, *time immemorial* already *Sutteeism* which is, as I have already hinted, something of this kind, existed

¹⁾ Caesar, *de bello Gallico*, lib. III, c. 22. ²⁾ Plutarch, *life of Sertorius*, c. 14, and *Val. Max.* II, 6, 12. ³⁾ Bartholinus, as quoted in §. 39, lib. II, c. X, p. 506 ff. ⁴⁾ Caesar, *l. c.* VI, 17, and, I believe, *Mela*, III, c. 2. ⁵⁾ Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, vol. I, pp. 30, 446. ⁶⁾ Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. I, p. 76. ⁷⁾ Kidd's *China*, p. 187, and cf. *Gutzlaff*, vol. I, p. 389. ⁸⁾ Williams, *narrative of missionary enterprises in the south sea islands*, p. 557.

among the Hindoos. „Time immemorial“, apparently at least; but neither the *exact* date can be fixed nor any *characteristic* motive be assigned.

Firstly, as to the date. It is perfectly certain that in the Institutes of Menu Sutteeism is neither enjoined nor mentioned, but rather, implicitly at least, discountenanced and condemned. About this matter there can be no dispute at all; but I must at the same time observe that in these same Institutes (vide more particularly ch. IX, §. 15, and ch. V, §§. 153—161) the sensual perverseness of woman-nature and the slavish subordination of the wife to the husband are put forth and insisted on with the most disgusting rigor. It is, however, equally certain that numerous passages in the Hindoo shastrûs (vide e. g. Ward, l. c. vol. II., pp. 544—566, and also Colebrooke and Colemann) may be found which bear either directly or indirectly on Suttéeism, approvingly, enjoiningly, though I must express my regret at my ignorance of the chronological origin of the said shastrûs. Furthermore, Ward¹⁾ and also Tod²⁾ treat us, though each with certain variations of spelling and even of *incident*, to a story from the theological mythology of the Hindoos which most indubitably refers Sutteeism to the example set by Sûtêê or Satî, the daughter of Dukschu, a son of Brumha, who, because of abuse that had been heaped on her husband Shivu by her own father, died of grief, or, burnt herself, when he was slain, in the very assembly of the ancient Divinities themselves. And, finally, this same Indian rite was unquestionably familiar to the (post-Alexander) writers of classical antiquity, is stated by them to have existed in Alexander's time, is frequently mentioned, and variously commented upon, by them; for they possessed nothing at all parallel (if we except e. g. the isolated mythic tale of Evadne flinging herself on the funeral pyre of her husband Capaneus) in their own antique story.

What e. g. Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Aelian have to communicate on this matter amounts simply to this: Sutteeism

¹⁾ L. c. vol. II, p. 161, in an analysis of the pooranu called Kashee-Khundu. Vide, however, the same writer's quotation from the Ungira and a commentator Hareetu ibid. p. 545. ²⁾ Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'hau, or the central and western Rajpoot States of India, 1829, vol. I, pp. 633, 634. The discrepancies between Ward's and Tod's accounts astonish me, and I cannot offer any suggestion for the reconciliation of them.

was something *voluntary* and even *emulous*, and they therefore allude to it in illustration of either female courage or conjugal affection. The reader is left to turn to their works for himself, since suchlike communications are of no real value for our present purpose. Somewhat more searching or, at least, detailed, as far as the question of *cause* is concerned, are the communications of e. g. Strabo (ubi supra) and Diodorus Sikulus (lib. XVII, c. 91, and XIX, c. 33 and c. 34), inasmuch as they would fain represent Sutteeism as a *law* (among the Indian tribe they call Kathaeans at least) which had been made *in olden time* for the express purpose of preventing wives from abandoning and poisoning their husbands, a practice said to have been very common in consequence of the circumstance that females married without due knowledge of the men they chose, and, being by nature frivolous and incontinent, often formed other liaisons and then made away with their legitimate spouses by secret poisons, that they might with a better grace ally themselves to their paramours.

We pass on to the communications of modern enquirers into the cause of Sutteeism.

Holwell (l. c. pp. 87—100, but especially pp. 90, 91) refers Sutteeism to events of a traditional age and of a semi-sacred character in the following manner. „At the demise of the mortal part of Bramah, the Gentoo great lawgiver and prophet, his wives, inconsolable for his loss, resolved not to survive him, and offered themselves as voluntary victims on his funeral pile. The wives of the chief Rajahs, the first officers of the State, being unwilling to have it thought that they were deficient in fidelity and affection, followed the heroic example set them by the wives of Bramah. The Bramins, a tribe then newly constituted by the said great legislator, pronounced and declared that *the delinquent spirits of those heroines immediately ceased from their transmigrations, and had entered the first Boboon of purification*. It followed that *their wives* claimed a right of making the same sacrifice of their mortal forms to God, and to the manes of their deceased husbands. The wives of every Gentoo caught the enthusiastic (now pious) flame. Thus the heroic acts of a few women brought about a general custom, the Bramins had given it the stamp of religion, they foisted it into the Chatah and Aughtorrah Bhades, and instituted the forms and ceremonials that were to accompany the sacrifice, strained some

obscure passages of Bramah's Chastah Bhade to countenance the declared sense of the action, and established it as a religious tenet throughout Indostan (subject to the restrictions before recited, which leaves it a voluntary act of glory, piety and fortitude). Whether the Bramins were sincere in their declared sense, and consecration of this act, or had a view to the securing the fidelity of their own wives, or were actuated by any other motives, we will not determine." — So far Holwell. Were this the veritable state of the matter, I would merely remind the reader of the following passage in the Institutes of Menu (ch. I, §. 108): „immemorial custom is transcendent law, approved in sacred scripture, and in the codes of divine legislators."

In Prof. Lee's notes to his already quoted version of Ibn Batuta, I find the following allegorization of Sutticism, extracted from the Dabistan, a work I am not acquainted with, but about which I remember having read (p. 136 of Fraser's above mentioned work on Persia) that it is a history of twelve superstitions, really or professedly compiled in Persian about 200 years ago, by a native of Cashmere who was nominally a Muhammadan, but in conviction a Bramin, from both Pehlevi MSS and the oral communications of adherents to the religion of Zoroaster. We'll believe so. „The doctors have said that the original intention of becoming a Suttie was this: that a woman should, after the death of her husband, consume all her desires, and thus die (to the world), before her natural death: for, in the language of mysticism, *woman* means *desire*; and the intention is, that she should cast away her desire, not that she should throw herself as a dead carcass into the fire, which is abominable." On which interpretation I will venture the following remark. Supposing that we could go to the root of the matter, and discover the said hyper-mystical construction not to be altogether without foundation, yet at all events all spiritual meaning must have become lost at a comparatively very early period in a wofully mechanical acceptance. Nevertheless, interesting in this point of view it has appeared to me that in the Indo-Germanic languages¹⁾ the notions of *purification* and *fire* meet etymologically in the most direct manner: Sanskrit *pu*, to purify, Latin *purus*, our pure, and Greek *πῦρ*, fire.

¹⁾ Vide Nork, *Altindische Mythologie*, B. I, p. 39, and his reference to Numb. XXXI, 23.

Other noteworthy hypotheses on the original cause of Sutteeism I have not become familiar with; for, of course, when e. g. Halhed¹⁾ informs us that „the Bramins seem to look upon this sacrifice as one of the first principles of their religion, the cause of which it would *hardly be orthodox* to investigate“; or, when the anonymous author of a somewhat recent publication²⁾ says „the Bramins themselves do not know, whether or not Sutteeism be permissible, or necessary“ — this may be very true, and seems to me not unlikely to be so,³⁾ thus only rendering our confusion „worse confounded“; but, of course, narratively no use can be made of suchlike revelations.

Well, then, whether, according to *Braminical lore*, Sutteeism be „permissible or necessary“, or *not* so, one thing is at all events beyond all dispute: for at least two thousand centuries, even — in very many parts of Hindostan at least, i. e. in such parts as, not being immediately or mediately subject to British rule and British interference, were not swayed by Lord William Bentinck's enactments anno 1829, or influenced by Major Ludlow's exertions a couple of decennaries later — up to this present hour, Sutteeism has assumed a most systematic shape, and has prevailed to a frightful extent, in the countries professing Hindooism.⁴⁾ Therefore, the only question left for us is this: is Sutteeism, according to *accepted usage*, legally *obligatory*, magisterially or sacerdotally *compulsory*, or, is it a perfectly *voluntary* act on the part of the Suttees herself?

As matter of course, solely as much as and as far as Sutteeism is a perfectly voluntary act could it be viewed as „religious suicide“, or, indeed, as *suicide at all*; were it, on the contrary, an obligatory or a compulsory act, it would be simply a species of *judicial murder* (vide §. 10). A few words one way or the other would not avail us much towards answering the above question; only by placing before ourselves, as far as our means of information extend, the various inducements to Sutteeism which exist in the tenets and

¹⁾ In his preliminary diss. to his version of the Gentoo Laws. ²⁾ British India, vol. II, pp. 424, 425. ³⁾ Interesting and important in this point of view is Tod's communication (l. c. vol. I, p. 531) that e. g. among the Vischnues, i. e. followers of Kaniya or Crishna, Sutteeism in neither practised nor permitted. ⁴⁾ Also e. g. in Malabar, Macassar, Japan, I believe, a species of Sutteeism exists (vide Montesquieu, *esprit des lois*, liv. 24, ch. 21 and ch. 19; and the essays of Meiners and Voltaire as quoted in §§. 14, 18); but it will be sufficient for all our purposes, if we restrict ourselves to Braminism in India Proper.

customs of Hindooism, shall we become enabled to discern how far the practice itself is likely to be the result of a voluntary resolution on the part of an Indian widow. We need then not take much notice of the express declaration, according to Colebrooke,¹⁾ of the Rigveda „that the legal wife who burns herself shall not be deemed a suicide“, or of the circumstance that, according to the same writer, a monument is always erected on the spot where a woman has burnt herself with her husband's corpse; — for, as we have already had occasion to discover, the Hindoos manifestly entertain most peculiar and confused notions about what constitutes suicide. — For the sake of greater brevity as well as perspicuity, I'll arrange what have appeared to me the essential items of this matter under three separate heads.

1. *The recompense awaiting the Suttée in the future world.* In Paradise, unspeakable joy and transcendent glory are in store for her; the Gods themselves will honor her, and obey her behests. She is to live thirty five millions of years with her spouse in Paradise; and, should a body be again allotted to her, she would have that of a man, not that of a woman, whereas, if she simply remain a widow, she would in the metempsychosis never have any other body but that of a woman. 2. *The beneficial consequences for her husband, and for his as well as her own relatives.* She not only saves herself from Purgatory, but extinguishes every stain attaching to her husband on account of any sin he had committed, and rescues him and a portion of his and her own relatives from Purgatory, and from being changed into animals in future transmigrations. It is, therefore, natural that she should rise enormously in the esteem of surviving relatives; and, moreover, her family is considered as ennobled, and supposed to be worthy of trust. Nay, even those who accompany her to the funeral pile, and gaze on her, whilst she is being burnt, perform thereby an act well-pleasing unto God. 3. *The allurements to her vanity and desire of comfort, and the threats held out to her fears.* If she do not become a Suttée, she sinks into insignificance and contempt, is constrained to manifold acts of piety and self-mortification, and besides the difficulty — in consequence of the exceedingly ardent temperaments of Indian women —

¹⁾ „On the duties of a faithful Hindu widow“, Asiatic Researches, vol. IV, p. 215 ff.

of keeping the vow of chastity exacted from her, all sorts of vexations trials await her. She is, during her whole subsequent life, clad in coarse habiliments, the relatives, or, in default or absence of such, the magistrates, are charged to watch over her, and by almost every imaginable restraint she is constantly reminded of her want of fealty or fidelity to her deceased spouse.¹⁾ —

Methinks, then, much *outward* force can scarcely be needed in a matter upon which so many and such various *inward* forces have been brought to bear, so that, if a Hindoo widow be not actuated by real affection for her husband, she would consider it her duty to conform to custom, or, might consent merely to avoid reproach, or, to escape the life of a Brachmachari, i. e. something very like what we should term that of a nun in one of the strictest conventual establishments, and, consequently, implying a vow of unconditional chastity and the frequent performance of sundry self-torturing exercises of piety. Let us, then, accord to this act, in ninety nine cases out of every hundred at least, the praise, a conditional one though it should seem to many of us, of *perfect voluntariness*, and regard it as an evidence of *love*, howsoever misguided, or *faith*, howsoever misgrounded, or *fortitude*, howsoever misplaced; let us, whilst unspeakably grateful for *christian* woman's more fortunate position, be on our guard — and not scoff or rail at, not revile or condemn, the *Hindoo* victim; for, perchance, as we think and believe, very many of them are nobler, purer, tenderer in and by their death-deed than very many of the widows among ourselves in their weeds, which „do but mock grief“, and in their speedy second, third, and fourth nuptials which do but belie the wedded covenant; and I for one venture to hope and trust that — in what they expected and sought yonder above in Brahma's mansion they will not be wholly deceived, or utterly disappointed. — Is this heresy or heterodoxy? Perhaps it is — what *you* deem so; but, O my orthodox, evangelical friend, think you that in *the Heavens* the church-catechism must needs be rehearsed, or methodist-hymns needs be chanted? —

¹⁾ Vide for these particulars, besides the Gentoo laws and Halhed's remarks, Ibn Batuta and Lee's notes, Colebrooke's last mentioned Essay, Ward, passim, also Colemann's Mythology of the Hindoos in various parts. Of course, however, I cannot undertake to vouch for the perfect correctness of each individual point.

Indeed, *actual* force would seem *very rarely*, if ever at all, and *never legally*, to be employed as *primary* influence, whether the wife or concubine be eight or eighty years of age. She *first* declares her willingness or desire to become a Suttee, and then it is not considered right to keep her back from her purpose; however, should she *subsequently* repent and recede, she may be, and, I have reason to assume, generally or universally is, *literally* forced into the fire: and it is in this last case that (many of) those very most harrowing scenes take place which sundry modern eye-witnesses, among our countrymen more especially, have described with a dramatic pathos which cannot fail to make us shudder all the more, the truer it may be. —

The more or less minutious *external regulations* of the Shasters in reference to the performance of Sutteeism do not immediately concern us here, though they too are in sundry respects instructive and remarkable enough; — and, if I have forbore to refer to any Statistical Tables about the occurrence of either Suicide in general or Sutteeism in particular among the Hindoos in the present day, I must plead as excuse that such statements as I have met with differ considerably one from the other. One simple reflection on such of our governmental measures and proselytizing efforts as have been brought into requisition against the tenets and practices of which we have been speaking may, therefore, conclude what we had to say about the Hindoos.

We have, if I have read aright, completely conquered about one half of Further India, and in a fashion half-conquered about one quarter more; and after Clivism, Warren Hastingsism, and Nabobism had been played off and practised by us in no very edifying manner, but very successfully for worldly objects, we, about half a century or so ago (calculating roughly) began to perceive and believe that, by way of making some return for all the wealth and power and glory we had acquired through our Indian exploits, manœuvres and adventures, and also by way of rendering our political and social footing there more secure and pleasant, we ought to pursue civilizing plans and contemplate *christianizing* measures in our Indian realm. And, no doubt, if the conquerors of a country be in possession of an indisputably superior culture and religion, they have both a right and a duty to try and to endeavor to win over the inhabitants of the said country to the acknowledgment and

the adoption of such indisputably superior culture and religion: to win over by *tuition, administration, example*, but not to pester and bother them by half-witted arguments and dull preachments into a new religion, and not to force upon them with the hand of power codes of law and new customs for which they have no reverence and with which they have no sympathy. Religious Suicide and traditionary Sutteeism, however, among our Hindoo subjects, dependents, allies are manifestly indissolubly interwoven with their ideas about the transmigration of souls, their belief in the multifarious incarnations of the deity, their mystical reverence for the confluence of rivers, their faith in the purifying power of fire, their notion about the inferiority of woman, and not altogether disconnected from their habits of polygamy and concubinage. Therein lie the *roots* of the evil; tear up these, and the evil will abolish itself, if slowly, yet surely. And, methinks, such tearing up would be better effected by — I must urgently beg the reader to understand the next six lines as meant *in general only*, and *not by any means sweepingly* — just and wise governors and moral, disinterested officials than by Anglican Bishops with their worldly pageantry (the Newspapers lately discussed the case of the Bombay one), and better by enlightened and judicious schoolmasters than by shallow, bigoted Missionaries (I speak from personal knowledge; for I spent nearly two years of my life in the chief European Evangelical Missionary College). *Intellectual* Hindoos, like Rammohun Roy, can be brought to understand, appreciate, adopt the exalting, fruitful *Ethics* of Christianity, but not its *dogmatical*, whether catholic or protestant, *mysteries*; and the intellectual, i. e. the teachers and guides, once being won, the *multitude*, illiterate, dependent, submissive, must sooner or later follow. Sap. sat.

III. The Chinese.

In §. 2 already I mentioned Gützlaff's historical work on China. It seemed to me, as one might have expected from its author's education and career, a performance as little philosophical in conception as elegant in point of composition. Nevertheless, considerable merit of some kind must be presumed to belong to it, since one of the greatest living sinologists, the converted Jew Prof. Neumann, has translated it into German; and such merit, I suppose, arises from the late missionary-consul's scrupulous fidelity to such original sources of information as his extraordinary knowledge of the lan-

guage and his long residence in the country had opened unto him. Well, upon almost every page of Gützlaff's work we find records of self-inflicted death, from the earliest times, i. e. about 2000 years a. C. (?), up to the present day: emperors and mandarins, empresses and concubines, and men and women in the humblest station terminate their lives by voluntary violence, sometimes isolatedly, and sometimes troop-wise, for almost any and every reason. For instance (vide vol. I, pp. 217, 252, and vol. II, p. 13), on one occasion, a Chinese says to his fellow-countryman: „you will very soon fall a victim to the tyrant; I advise you, therefore, to commit suicide“; — on another occasion, an emperor, when on the point of killing himself, exclaims: „it is better to die free, than to dishonor one's ancestors by an ignominious captivity“; — and, again, on another occasion a subject addresses an emperor thus: „let us save ourselves from the disgrace of having died by the hands of these infamous rebels“, and both of them forthwith destroyed themselves.

Gützlaff, moreover, repeatedly asserts (vide what was said in §§. 2, 3) that *all* the modifications of the national religion of China, i. e. no less what e. g. Con-fû-tzee taught 5 centuries a. C. than what e. g. Fan-chin taught 5 centuries p. C., equally deny the immortality of the soul; nor can we but admit that sundry facts he adduces would appear both to confirm and to elucidate the correctness of his assertion. Yet, if already the tenor of *all* religion and the tendency of *every* human heart would dispose me to imagine and surmise that Gützlaff somewhat misunderstood and misconstrued in this respect the religious tenets of the inhabitants of the celestial empire, sundry direct testimonies I have fallen in with afford more or less countenance to such imagining and surmising. First of all, Majer in an elaborate article on Fo¹⁾ intimates — what I take to be in all probability the real state of the case — that, though Fo himself at the end of his life confessed his own utterly materialistic creed to his disciples („know, then, that there is no other primitive essence of all things, except the Void and the Nothing, that all things are produced therefrom, will return thereto, and that all our hopes terminate therein“), yet this communication of his

¹⁾ Allgemeines mythologisches Lexicon, aus Original-Quellen bearbeitet, B. II, pp. 94—118.

has remained, as it were, *esoteric Fohism, the People as such* being taught to believe in Immortality and Retribution. Secondly, however, the catholic missionary du Halde, in his elaborate historical work on China, published more than a century ago, communicates¹⁾ what, whilst bearing directly on the topic of our investigation, is eminently calculated to stagger our belief in the materialism of the Chinese multitude. Chin, namely, a modern Chinese philosopher, whilst refuting in a most tediously lengthy dialogue the doctrines of Fo and Lao, accounts for, on the ground of consistency, the prevalence of suicide among the adherents of Fohism in the following manner, and repudiates the theorem from which such prevalence springs. „The same Book which represents our bodies as mere habitations where we take up our lodging, tends to make us neglect them, and refuse them the affection as well as compassion so necessary for their preservation. This is what inclines the disciples of Fo who are disgusted with the present life, to seek the means of procuring a better as soon as possible: there are some who go on pilgrimage to Pagodas situate on the top of steep rocks, and after they have ended their prayers, as if they were sure of being heard, cast themselves headlong into some dreadful abyss; others are lavish of their lives in giving themselves up to the most shameful excesses; others who meet with obstacles to their unlawful passions, go by consent and hang or drown themselves, that when they are born again they may become husband and wife: *these are the consequences of that senseless doctrine of the transmigration of souls.*“

Of course, I cannot pretend to be able to bring anything like criticism of my own to bear on the above extract from the literature of a people whose strange language hedges in their opinions and doctrines in some such fashion as the great wall, of which all of us have read in our childhood, is said to gird their country, and by thus girding it may have contributed largely towards rendering the inhabitants thereof themselves a comparatively unknown, isolated, and apparently quiescent race. But, whatever estimate we may choose to form of du Halde's intelligence and veracity, all European writers on China to whose works I have had access, seem unani-

¹⁾ Vol. I, p. 671 of the English translation, which appeared in folio. The French original of this bulky and minute work I have not seen.

mous on this one particular: that the Chinese are extremely prone to self-destruction, and without any religious or moral misgivings commit it, if temptation of any sort exist. — We will now address ourselves to such principal works themselves. M. de Guignes, having travelled or resided chiefly in China during the years intervening between 1784 and 1801, whilst speaking of the national character of the Chinese, makes the following brief observation.¹⁾ „Cruels lorsqu'ils sont les plus forts, et lâches dans le danger, ils sont attachés à la vie: il en est cependant quelquefois qui se donnent la mort; mais le suicide est plus commun parmi les femmes que parmi les hommes; chez elles, c'est l'effet de la jalousie et de la colère, ou l'envie de susciter à leurs maris quelques mauvaises affaires.“ — Barrow, however, makes out a much stronger case against them. After having²⁾ spoken of their extreme want of personal courage or presence of mind in dangers and difficulties, he proceeds thus. „Nevertheless, there is, perhaps, no country where suicide both among men and women occurs more frequently than it does in China: since such actions are not considered disgraceful, they are likewise not abhorred. One might even believe that Government encourages to suicide, because it very frequently softens condemnation to death into permitting the criminal to execute himself (vide what we said in §. 16). The last viceroy of Canton terminated, about two years ago, his life by swallowing his stone snuff-jar which remained sticking in his throat so that he died amid torturing pains.“ — Finally, the French Jesuit Trigault (Trigauius), compiling his accounts from the commentaries of the Jesuit missionary Riccius already in the first quarter of the 17th century, after having spoken of the doctrine of the metempsychosis by which the Chinese endeavor to justify the exposure and slaughter of their children, assures us also³⁾ that, in connexion with the identical tenet, stands the practice of suicide, and, that at all events many (compiures) commit suicide either *from the despair of being able to procure possessions, or wearied by the endurance of evils, or, finally, which motive Trigautius pronounces more especially cowardly*

¹⁾ Voyages à Peking, Manille et l'île de France, 1808, T. II, pp. 162, 163. ²⁾ Vide Huttner's German Translation of Barrow's Travels in the year 1793 and 1794 through China from Peking to Canton, 1804, Th. I. p. 217. ³⁾ De christiana expeditione apud Sinas, suscepta ab Societate Jesu, lib. I, cap. IX, p. 97 in the edit. 1615.

and stupid (impotenter sane, non minus stolidè), for the purpose of causing vexation to their enemies. „*Multa* — he then proceeds — enim in annos singulos hominum *millia* ferunt, virorum ac mulierum, seipsos in campis, vel pro adversarii feribus; injecto in fumeis nodo, praefocare, aut in flumina insilire, haustove *levibus* aliquando ex *cunctis* veneno sibi vitam eripere.“ For — he continues to narrate — „because the magistrates afterwards proceed with severity against those who are accused by a defunct person's relatives of having been the cause of his despair, they believe that they cannot avenge (or, vindicate) themselves in any better (or, other) manner. However, there are not a few more sapient Magistrates who by an express law declare that they will not undertake the cause of any person who has dispatched himself: whereby the lives of many are saved.“

IV. The Siamese.

In the 16th century, Portuguese and French missionaries successively, but unsuccessfully, attempted to introduce Catholicism into the kingdom of Siam, and at the commencement of the 17th cent. Dutch traders began to found settlements there, the result of which twofold European undertaking is, I believe, that, whether for good or for ill, the Romanising religious influences have pretty well vanished from before the Protestant mercantile enterprises, so that up to this day the about half a dozen millions of inhabitants pay a sort of divine worship to an autoeratic ruler (Kong-Luang) and submissively bow to the teachings of an essentially *Buddhist* sacerdotal corporation (Telapoins), from which latter circumstances we might a priori infer that also in this realm of Further India something kindred to Hindoo pro-suicidalism prevails. „*All Indians*“ — thus the Frenchman de la Loubere¹⁾ who travelled to Siam in the years 1687 and 1688 and published two small volumes about his voyage thither and the many strange things he had seen and heard and learnt during his temporary residence there — „believe that suicide is not only a permitted thing, because they consider themselves lords over themselves, but that it is also a sacrifice useful to the soul, one which procures for it a great degree of virtue and happiness. Thus the Siamese frequently hang themselves from devotion on a tree (which is planted before the Pagodas, it not

¹⁾ Description du royaume de Siam, partie III, ch. 21, pp. 384, 385.

being allowed to stand in private gardens) which they call in Balic¹⁾ *Prá si maha Pout*, and in Siamese *Ton pô*. „But in that passion (zele) which sometimes determines the Siamese to hang themselves, there is always visible as cause a great weariness of life, or, also great fear, as, for instance, of the anger of the King“. Loubere likewise relates the self-burning of a Pegüan in a temple, and how afterwards a statue was made of his body by means of a gypsum-coating, and placed behind the image of the God, and that this species of Saints are called *Prá tian té*, i. e. genuine and real *Prá*.

More than this I have not to communicate in immediate connexion with the topic of our enquiry.

V. The Japanese.

„The Japanese children are made to get by heart poems in which the actions of their forefathers are celebrated, a contempt of life is inculcated, and *suicide is set up as the most heroic of all actions*. These songs and poems, which are said to be full of energy and beauty, beget enthusiasm. The Japanese education tends to inflame and excite the soul to heroism. This people is guided through life by sentiment. They are eager in the pursuit of pleasure, and would rather suffer, than be without feelings. In a word, they aim and wish to keep the soul from sinking into a state of languor and inactivity.“ Thus the free-thinking French Abbé Raynal in a work²⁾ the manifest revolutionary and anti-catholic tendency of which all but caused him to be arrested at the instance of the Clergy. The said passage forms part of a somewhat peculiar parallel which he attempts to draw between the Chinese and the Japanese, and according to which same lively portraiture he would seem to have been bent upon delineating the Japanese as, we might say, the *French of the East*. However, what here alone concerns us, can scarcely be deemed in the least exaggerated, as we may easily convince ourselves by referring to earlier original sources as well as later careful compilations.

¹⁾ This „Baly“ or Pali is affirmed to be their learned language, inasmuch as this Mongolic race, at a comparatively early period, received and adopted from India all the higher elements of their civilization, such as it is; their own language, Siamese, is pronounced to be kindred to Chinese. ²⁾ Philosophical and political history of the settlements and trade of Europeans in the East and West Indies, vol. I, pp. 202, 203 of Justamond's translation.

I'll commence with Kämpfer.¹⁾

Speaking of the religious System Sintoo (dsjuto, sjuto, sju), he records what follows. „The Moral Philosophy of these teachers consists in five articles which are termed Go, Seo, or often also Tsine, and are Dsin, Gi, Re, Tsi, and Sin. Gi designates the power over one's self and the rule over one's passions. Those, therefore, who despatch themselves for lawful causes, are considered valiant. Also suicide is permitted unto them only in one case which, however, will not easily occur to a person who leads a virtuous life, viz. if one thereby anticipate a disgraceful action or a victorious foe.“

But, what is this same Sintoo of which Kämpfer here speaks? According to an anonymous English compiler,²⁾ there exist several religions upon this same extensive island, three of which, however, are more particularly worthy of mention, because the furthest spread and the most influential, viz. the original system, Sinsgu, i. e. faith of Gods; Buddhism, introduced at some unknown period prior to our era, and at present by much the predominant form of belief and worship; and, thirdly, Sintoo, i. e. the way of philosophers, a species of eclectic and mystical adaptation of the doctrines of Kung-foo-tse. — I cannot say, whether this popular digest of an extremely intricate matter be trust-worthy or not; but, supposing it to be so, then what Majer (vide l. c. B. I, p. 317—322 s. v. Budsdo, and pp. 76, 77 s. v. Amida, and p. 402 s. v. Japaner) calls Budsdo (idolorum cultus? he renders it) would be, doubtless, merely the Japanese term for Buddhism, and of it what follows (ubi supra in Kämpfer) would hold good. I will, however, give merely the *substance* of Kämpfer's commentations, as far as they can bear upon our express theme. All human souls are immortal, and in a future world retributive justice is exercised, each individual, according to his meritorious or culpable actions, being placed in a locality of eternal joyousness (Gokurakf), which is however divided into many graduated sections, or in a sort of Hell or rather Purgatory (Dsigokf). Now, and this is the principal point for our present purpose, the highest and chief ruler of those various Heavens is the God *Amida* who unites within himself all those benevolent, mediatorial, redeeming qualities and potencies

¹⁾ Geschichte und Beschreibung von Japan, aus den Originalschriften des Verfassers herausgegeben von Dohm, 1777, B. I, pp. 296—299, 305, 306. ²⁾ Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the 19th century, 1841, pp. 334—352.

which orthodox Protestantism ascribes to Jesus and orthodox Catholicism to the Virgin and the Saints. I hope that nobody will be shocked by this apparently irreverent parallel, since it is fully warranted by several items which the reader shall be left to seek for himself in Kämpfer. Of course, I made it simply and solely for brevity's sake, and I sincerely trust that nobody will find real irreverence in my having thus spoken of Jesus and Amida in the same breath. But to proceed. Without attempting to reconcile contradictions or to account for mystifications, I merely state (vide Majer; for I have not pursued this point much beyond his communications) that the said Amida dwelt, as an incarnation of the Deity, many thousands of years ago 1000 or 2000 years on the earth, voluntarily imposed upon himself a multitude of penances, spent the time in delivering innumerable preachments to the people and performing many miracles, and, *being at length tired of this life, passed by a voluntary death over into another life, where he was* (though, by the by, he would seem to have been a Divinity also previously!) *raised to the dignity of a God.*

In this tradition, then, as it seems to me, we have discovered something like a *religious* cause for the legality and meritoriousness of suicide among the Japanese, looking away from all philosophical tempests.

There exists, however, also what we may call a *political* cause to which Montesquieu already drew attention, when he (*Esprit des lois*, liv. VI, ch. 18) observed that the despotism of the Japanese government punishes almost every misdemeanor, aye, even the smallest offence, with death. By way of explanatory analogy, we need only think of what occurred at Rome in the worst ages of Imperial sway, when a Tiberius was wont to exclaim of a suicide, „*me evasit*“, and of the 1700 cases of suicide which (according to Esquirol) occurred at Versailles in the year 1792. But, as regards the Japanese we must pursue the matter still more closely.

„If — thus we read on pp. 198, 177 of the above mentioned English work — the Japanese has incurred any disfavor, or committed any offence, the conviction of which would be attended with disgraceful punishment, confiscation, and corruption of blood, he probably rips himself up, either in his family circle, if any good to his family be contingent upon his death's remaining for a time concealed (naybeen), or, publicly, in a solemn assembly of his friends,

if the object be solely the satisfaction of justice, and the obviating of punishment. The *hara-kiri* operation (i. e. *happy dispatch*, viz. the operation of abdomen-ripping) is, upon some occasions, performed in a temple, after a splendid entertainment, given to and shared with relations, friends, and the priests of the temple. In the schools, the boys (but, as far as I have been able to gather, not the girls also) are taught not only the proper mode of performing the operation, and the several accompanying ceremonials, varying with the occasion, and with the consequent publicity or privacy, but also the nature of the occasions, i. e. of the causes and situations, which render this form of suicide imperative upon a gentleman."

And, if the reader should covet some recent verifications and illustrations of Japanese suicidism, he is merely requested to open any one modern work of travel, which touches on Japan, and he will be sure to get his curiosity most painfully gratified on this point. Here a few instances at random. An English reviewer¹⁾ extracts from „Golownin's captivity in Japan“ the following narrative. A Japanese of some official rank, intending suicide by ripping open his bowels, had previously cut the central tuft of hair from the crown of his head, and laid it in a box, which contained his portrait, to be sent to his friends by way of signifying that he had died an honorable death, the hair in this case being buried by them with all the ceremonies which would be observed at the interment of his body. — An English reviewer²⁾ of „Doeff's recollections of Japan“ transcribes a narrative about a Japanese governor who, having been outwitted in his vigilance by an English naval commander, within half an hour after the discovery of his misfortune stabbed himself in the abdomen, the six or seven officers of the neglected post at once following his example. — And, finally, the *Augsbürger Allgemeine Zeitung*³⁾ communicates the following narrative from the Account which the North American Commodore Perry anno 1854 gave of his expedition to Japan. Shortly before his voyage home, he wished to see the Capital (Jedo), and to have it sketched, in order to add the drawing to the book he intended to publish, and he turned a deaf ear to the declaration of the commissioners of the

¹⁾ Quarterly Review, 1817, July, p. 137. ²⁾ Ibid. 1836, July, p. 427. Neither of the above works themselves has lain within my reach. ³⁾ Nov. 10, 1854. Did I know where the narrative stands in English, I should content myself with merely referring to it.

Japanese Court that they were not authorized to permit him to do so. His fleet, therefore, steamed joyously up the glorious bay until it came within about ten miles from Jedo. Also the renewed declaration of the interpreters and negotiators that, as soon as the foreign friends should have arrived within sight of the City, they would, they must, rip open their bowels, was left unheeded; and preparations were made for sailing on. Then the collective Japanese escort pulled off their outer garments, laid their sharply ground swords down by their side, and fetched the suicide-attire. Prudence and humaneness bade the Commodore not let matters come to this extremity. Whilst the Japanese Court-Officials were making serious preparations for committing suicide, the fleet was commanded to turn back. To which narrative the following comments are appended, which perfectly agree with, but are more minute than, the annotations which are to be found in the above mentioned two English critiques. „According to the custom of that strangely despotic country, all Officials are obliged, if they cannot execute the Ruler's commission, whether in consequence of any guilt of their own or in consequence of circumstances, to take away their own lives by ripping open their bowels. This action having been performed, the head is cut off by a servant who stands behind. Such a slaughter is considered honorable; the family of the deceased remains in possession of its property, its honors and dignities. For this purpose, the Officials carry along with them a threefold garment: their proper official attire, an attire for conflagrations, and one for this legal suicide. Young persons of good family, as among us in dancing and riding, receive for years instruction, so that they may be able to perform the operation in a decorous manner. Such non-esteem of life is spread among all, the lower as well as the higher, classes. They all prefer death to disgrace.“

§. 38. PEOPLES IN AFRICA.

We commenced this Chapter with Asia as the presumed cradle of the human race, and lingered somewhat long over it. Our communications on Barbaric Peoples in the remaining quarters of the globe shall be far less comprehensive.

I. The ancient Egyptians.

Since the historian of the Genesis himself admits that the Egyptian State was of greater antiquity than that of the Hebrews, and

Jewish tradition¹⁾ — scriptural warrant there is as little for this fact as there is e. g. for Paul's assigning²⁾ the names of Jannes and Jambres to two Egyptian magicians in Moses' time — records that „Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians“, it would be, had not the ancient Egyptian so-called Hermetic writings or whatsoever other authentic documents once existed been engulfed in the stream of time, interesting to compare the Hebrew legislator's absolute overlooking of the topic of suicide (vide §. 48) with what I should incline to suppose to have been the pretty frequent occurrence and the religious approval of self-slaughter among the Egyptians in the age of Moses. However, I said advisedly „incline to suppose“; for the evidence, if such it may be called, I am able to offer is at best most scanty and dubious. Herodotos³⁾ tells us that, about 2000 years a. C., the native Egyptian Queen Nitokris destroyed herself, in order to escape from vindictive punishment. Of Sesosis or Sesostris, the celebrated Egyptian monarch who is said to have flourished about the 13th cent. a. C., Diodorus Siculus, says:⁴⁾ „after a reign of thirty three years, he terminated his life voluntarily, because he had lost his sight, and this deed was *admired not only by the priests*, but also by the other Egyptians, as a *worthy conclusion* of a life which had abounded in such great actions.“ Also Josephus⁵⁾ makes some allusion from Manetho to suicide in Egypt during the sojourn of the Hebrews there, though, it is true, for the purpose of denying the there specified instance.

II. The Carthaginians.

What little I can gather from the annals of ancient history must induce us to believe that this very mercantile, enterprizing and morally ill-reputed ancient people were on religious grounds very favorably disposed to suicide, and committed it pretty frequently, as, indeed, even both compulsory and voluntary human sacrifices (an instance of the latter, the two brothers Philaeni, as mentioned by Val. Max. V, 6, I alluded to already in §. 8) obtained among them, the latter somewhat in the spirit of Hindoo Juggernautism, as Münter casually remarks,⁶⁾ and they were venerated as divine.

¹⁾ Acts VII, 22. Somewhat curious, by the by, is the gratuitous length to which this matter is pushed by e. g. the Latin epitomist Justinus, lib. 36, c. 2, who makes Moyses the son of Joseph, and heir to his Egyptian attainments and secrets. ²⁾ Tim. III, 8. ³⁾ Lib. II, c. 100. ⁴⁾ Lib. I, c. 58; and cf. also ibid. c. 51. ⁵⁾ Contra Apionem, lib. I, 28. ⁶⁾ Vide his very learned monograph Religion der Carthager, zweite Ausgabe, 1821, pp. 20, 108, 117.

Virgil's Dido (vide §. 17) is known to everybody; less well known, however, it may be to some that, according to Justinaus,¹⁾ her prototype Elissa in the 9th cent. a. C. slew herself with a sword on a funeral pyre, and was worshipped by the Carthaginians as a Goddess. The same historian narrates to us²⁾ the extremely deliberate and determined manner in which, in the 4th cent. a. C., Iantico (Amilkas, Hamilkar) died of voluntary self-starvation, for which mode of death Herodot³⁾ substitutes self-conflagration, expressly adding „to him the Karchedonians make sacrifices; they have likewise erected monuments to him in all their colonies, and the largest in Karchedon itself.“ The desperate suicidal end of Hasdrubal's widow is familiar to all students of ancient history, and still more familiar is the great Hannibal's carrying poison about him as a provision in case of need, and his ultimate making use of it. — We, therefore, cannot but assume that self-slaughter suited right well the religious notions and customs of the ancient Carthaginians, about whose Gods and Goddesses the Old Testament itself treats us to various certainly not edifying items.

§. 39. PEOPLES IN EUROPE.

Who can fail to know, or hesitate to admit, that among all those various tribes of the Barbaric inhabitants of our quarter of the globe, with whom the Romans came into hostile contact a century or two before our era, and during the first few centuries of our era, by whatsoever names we may choose to call them, e. g. Goths, Germani, Gaels, Celts, Batavi, Helvetians, suicide was viewed very favorably and committed very frequently? Regarded and practised as a rude, heroic virtue, and the apparently almost necessary fruit of a brave, manly, stern religious creed and a wild, wandering, thecquered warrior-life? Turn to the pages of the Latin historians and poets, where proofs enough, but only isolated data, are given, from which little more than the above general proposition can be established: wherefore we here willingly forego quoting them, and shall limit ourselves to one people concerning whom, in this particular, somewhat ample and not altogether uninteresting *native* materials

¹⁾ Lib. XVIII, 6. ²⁾ Lib. XIX, 3. ³⁾ Lib. VII, c. 167. Cf. also Diod. Sic. XIV, c. 76.

have been placed at the bidding of us moderns. I allude to the *Skandinavians*, prior, of course, to the introduction of Christianity into the North by Anschar, Rembert and other giant-missionaries of olden time who, Alexander-like sighing and seeking for distant realms where they might plant the banner of the Cross, went forth and did their work without either much expensive machinery or sentimental romanticism, by means of which our hodiernal Missions are often rendered rather most sorry Shams than most noble Realities.

Odinism we generally call yon Boreal Heathendom; but, who or what was Odin? The veritable chieftain and leader of an Asiatic tribe which immigrated into Northern Europe long before the christian era, so that „the ancient heroic saga was subsequently transformed by the priesthood into Deology, and not vice versa a supposititious history arbitrarily created by late posterity out of a scanty extract of Deology.“ Thus, for instance, Wietersheim a couple of years ago,¹⁾ drily in scholarlike fashion. — A spiritual being who „restlessly searches into the world and strengthens the cause of the Gods, everywhere awakening spiritual life and attracting into his celestial hall the earthly heroic spirit for loftier vocation, for vigorous participation in the great combat of the Gods.“ Thus, for instance, the most soulful of living poets (Uhlund) in mystic fashion,²⁾ taking his stand upon the very word itself (Odinn = Odem, Athem, breath, spirit). I know not. But, whether a mere flesh and blood *warrior-priest*, or a sort of imaginary *man-god*, certain is and remains that universal ancient mythologic tradition makes this same Odin in so far *mortal*, despite what of *divinity* was presumed to appertain to him, as to let him quit the earth, or, return to Åsgard, his reputed celestial abode, by dint of a *self-inflicted* death.

Neither upon the peculiar manner of his death, nor upon the far-fetched explanations which have been given thereof, need I here dwell. The former is detailed in Mallet,³⁾ the latter are hinted at by Münter.⁴⁾ What now and here chiefly concerns us is this undoubted fact: Odin's example was regarded and accepted by his followers or worshippers, viz. the ancient Northern peoples, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, as inculcating the startling doctrine that, except

¹⁾ *Der Vorgesichte Deutscher Nation*, p. 13. ²⁾ *Mythes von Thor*, p. 21.

³⁾ *Northern Antiquities*, edited by Blackwell. ⁴⁾ *Strängesjötte von Dänemark und Norwegen*, Th. I.

the legitimate warrior-death on the field of battle or in a duel, suicide was the only means of entrance into Asgard after him. Thence, indeed, „to cut Runes to Odin“, or, „to mark Odin upon one's self“ (viz. with the sword), or, „to go to Odin“ — were terms¹⁾ synonymous with *to kill one's self*. Whosoever, on the contrary, died of disease or old age was said to die „the death of old women“ (Kerlingadaude, cf. our word carlin and the German *Tob*), and had to expect nothing else but banishment into Nifelheim, the gloomy realm of Hel, Loka's daughter. Therefore, if sickness or age threatened a natural death, and there were no other means of escape, suicide was, we may safely say, recommended, or, if you like, commanded: so that the ancient Skandinavian chroniclers and minstrels are pretty copious in their recitals of not only pre-eminent individual instances, e. g. those of the Danish Kings Helgo and Hading, and of the celebrated old warrior Stareather, but likewise of entire troops and families who sought to ensure unto themselves the gross, but congenial, felicity of Walhalla by a self-wrought death, the latter generally by hurling themselves from rocky steepes (Ättestupor, i. e. family-rocks) into a lake which lay at their base, sometimes after previous dance and music.²⁾

§. 40. PEOPLES IN AMERICA.

Having, finally, arrived on this vast Continent, we will again confine our communications to one race, and this time sheerly from not having had an opportunity of acquiring any exact information about the numerous other races; at least, any information which we could turn to satisfactory account.

The French Jesuit Lafltau, when discussing the religious notions of various confederated *North American Indian Tribes* in or near the present Canadas — we, I believe, generally denominate them

¹⁾ The first of them occurs frequently in Tegnér's lovely Swedish poem *Frithiofs-Saga*, as translated by Amalia von Hedwig; the second is mentioned in Geijer's *Gefäktet von Schweden*, B. I; and the third may be found in the *Götreks og Hrolfs Saga* in Müller's *Sagabibliothek*, Th. II, p. 579. ²⁾ Vide for corroborative and illustrative evidence (besides e. g. pp. 82, 150, 208 of Blackwell's already quoted Mallet and pp. 102, 103 of the first vol. of Geijer's already quoted work) Sir William Temple's Works, vol. III, p. 359, and chiefly Bartholinus' *Antiquitates Danicae de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis*, 1690, pp. 26—29, p. 317sq., p. 382sq.

the Iroquois — introduces¹⁾ what follows. „This (i. e. their) land of souls has also its various stages, and not all persons are equally well off therein. This inference one of our Missionaries draws from what he heard a young female savage say. This girl, seeing her sister dying from the quantity of poison (ciguë, hemlock, is the word used in the original; but is, perhaps, the root of the may-apple — which is said not to kill very quickly, but to cause successive fits, but, though it yield on the first stage to a strong emetic diluted in lukewarm water, to injure more or less the constitution and health permanently — vide further on — not meant?) she had taken from vexation, and firmly resolved not to use any antidote, shed burning tears, and endeavored to induce her to give up her resolution, for the sake of the close relationship and friendship which united them. She repeatedly said to her: it is then over, you will that we are never to find each other again and never to see each other again? The Missionary, struck by these words, interrogated her about the reason. It appears to me, he said, that you have a land of souls where you must all be re-united with your ancestors; why, then, do you speak thus to your sister? The girl replied: it is true, all of us go into the land of souls; but the wicked, and those in particular who have shortened their lives by a violent death (mais les méchants, et ceux en particulier qui se sont détruits eux-mêmes par une mort violente), carry along with them thither the punishment of their crime. They are there separated from the others, and have no communion with them: and this is the cause of my affliction.“ — Lafitau does not forget to remind us on this occasion of Virgil (vide §. 18); but, for my own part, I experience considerable difficulty in believing that the said nameless Jesuit missionary comprehended the said young Indian maiden aright, or that she estimated correctly the creed of her tribe. However, before going further, I will communicate what another French Jesuit, de Charleroi, states. When speaking of the ideas and practices of the Hurons, Iroquois and other neighbouring tribes, he says.²⁾ „They have taken into their heads that the souls of those who have died a violent death (qui out peri de mort violente), even in war, or for the service of

¹⁾ Moeurs des Sauvages Amériquains, comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps, 1724, T. I, p. 404. ²⁾ Histoire et description générale de la nouvelle France, avec le journal historique d'un voyage fait par ordre du Roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, 1744, T. III, pp. 376, 377.

their country, have not in the next world any intercourse (commerce) with the others, and on this principle they burn them, or at once inter them, sometimes even before they have expired. They never place them in the common cemetery (*Cimetière commun*), and do not allow them any share in that grand ceremony (*viz. la Fête des Morts* or *le Festin des Ames*) which takes place every eight years among some tribes, and every ten years among the Hurons and Iroquois.“ — I presume, though Charlevoix does not hint at this, that we should necessarily have to number suicides among the said class; and, supposing the matter as related to be true, we cannot but agree with him, when he adds that it „ne me paroît excusable par aucun endroit.“

Well, returning for a moment to Lafitau's communication, it is true, in modern accounts of some one barbaric or semi-barbaric people we may occasionally meet with strange passing allusions to the infelicitous and comfortless state of the departed souls of the *self-stain*. Here a curious instance by way of example. According to Pallas,¹⁾ the Tangutes and Mongoles believe in a kind of ghosts or scare-images, called *Bok* and *Tangutish Dschogé*, „which are said to be spirits of persons who have destroyed themselves in some manner, or have died under the curse of the clergy, thence restlessly, and without being able to obtain a new body, haunt men (*hecrumsputen*) and inflict all sorts of injury and terror.“ And the same writer, when giving a horridly minute description of the said tribes' notions about the *Birid*, spirits that lead a sort of *Tantalus-life*, thirsting and hungering ever, since they *can* neither drink nor eat, for 500 years, the days of which are equal to our months, and, after this period has elapsed, are born again as most abject animals, insects, serpents and suchlike, and must by good works seek to raise themselves into some higher animal-forms, says that in these same spirits chiefly blasphemers, murderers of their parents or teachers, or *self-murderers* are born again. — But, I doubt much, whether aught of this kind be really traceable among the North American Indians: and for two reasons. Firstly. None of the modern tribes I have read of as living in a savage or wild state, more or less *kindred* to that of the North American Indians, would seem to harbor any *religious*

¹⁾ *Sammlungen historischer Nachrichten über die Mongolischen Völkerschaften*, 1776, X. II, pp. 51, 55.

dread of the consequences of suicide. I'll take the *Kamtschadals* and *Sidimenes* as illustrations. Of the former the adventurous traveller Beniowski states.¹⁾ „Suicide is *very usual* among them. There are examples that Kamtschadals, when they were besieged by the Cossacks in a place of asylum, and had no hope at all left of being able to flee, first cut the throats of their wives and children, and then killed themselves. For this purpose the use of Muchomor, a rock-fungus which grows very abundantly in these parts, is very serviceable: a decoction of it causes hilarity and intoxication, but, if the dose be too strong, convulsions and, at last, death.“ Of the latter the scrupulous and scientific Steller writes.²⁾ „They are devoid of hope, value only present things, and are incited by the slightest word of blame or threat to the extreme of fear, i. e. despair. Whoever intends to scold or punish one of them, must do so forthwith: then he is joyous and merry. But, if the punishment be deferred, and he be kept in arrest, or menaced, he does not allow himself to be tortured long by thoughts, but puts a speedy termination to fear by suicide. ... The easiest death they seek in drowning; next to this, in hanging; but the hardest, if they must wound themselves with a knife. They are so especially predisposed to suicide that they destroy themselves without any other cause, simply if they consider themselves old, frail, and useless in the world. And it appears that the hope of getting sooner into the lower and better world considerably animates them to autochiria. In former times, many, when they became ill, requested that one might feed the dogs with their living bodies, in order that they might not be tortured by long illness: which thing was immediately done. The most common manner of self-destruction was formerly this: whoever was tired of life, took leave of his relatives, seized a vessel, repaired into the wilderness, built himself a hut, drank water, laid himself down to sleep, and died of self-starvation.“ Thus far *indirect* testimony; and, secondly, coming to *direct* testimony, I for my part should strongly incline to set aside Lafitau's communication altogether, and to accept in its stead even the following representation of a simple-

¹⁾ Reisen durch Sibirien und Kamtschatka, aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Forster, 1790, pp. 92, 93. ²⁾ Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka, dessen Einwohner, deren Sitten, Namen, Lebensart und verschiednen Gewohnheiten, 1774, pp. 293, 294, und cf. p. 289.

mind, laborious American protestant minister¹⁾ only *with certain modifications*; for at the bottom of all of the cases which he details there was disappointed love, or matrimonial misery, and not one of them was characterized by anything resembling *mental derangement*. „Suicide is not considered by the Indians (Heckewelder is speaking of those tribes who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States) either as an act of heroism or of cowardice, nor is it with them a subject of praise or blame. They view this desperate act as the consequence of mental derangement, and the person who destroys himself is to them an object of pity. Such cases do not frequently occur. Between the years 1771 and 1780, four Indians of my acquaintance took the root of the may-apple, which is commonly used on such occasions, in order to poison themselves, in which they all succeeded, except one.“

¹⁾ Heckewelder's report, as communicated in Buchanan's *Sketches of the History, Manners, and Customs of the N. American Indians*, 1824, pp. 184—187.



THIRD SECTION.

MUHAMMADANISM.

§. 41. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The order in which we have chosen to discuss our theme is, as the reader will have already perceived, neither strictly *chronological*, nor strictly *dogmatical*. If we had aimed at Chronology, we ought to have commenced with the Eastern Asiatics, as Buonafède and Moore did; and, if we had desired to proceed upon what we might term principles of Dogmatism, we ought to have placed the Hebrews in the van, as Stäudlin has done. As, however, I had purposed to *develop* the subject-matter of this Essay in a manner radically different from my three just-mentioned predecessors, so various reasons more or less significant — at least, in my own sight — induced me also to *arrange* such subject-matter in a radically different manner; and the Treatise itself alone must show, whether these reasons (at which I will here merely hint) for the external sequence I have selected, be good or bad. Firstly. The philosophical and literary pre-eminence of classic over barbaric Paganism for our purpose, as well as for any other of a kindred nature, is too self-evident to require comment. Secondly. Judaism, as containing the germs, and evoking, howsoever unwillingly and indirectly, the fruits, of Christianity, ought to precede immediately the latter, unto which, in its turn, I very naturally wished to devote the terminatory, because the culminatory, portion of the entire book. Thirdly. Muhammadanism, which Moore and Stäudlin have wholly omitted, and about which Buonafède has said as much as nothing, and his French translators (*vide* p. 349 ff.) only talk some egregiously blundering and baseless nonsense, is a plant entirely *sui generis*, and not merely a prominent, vigorous,

heavily laden branch of the great tree of barbaric Paganism. Its roots, as we may say, more or less in Heathen soil; yet, doubtless, it owes by far the greater portion of its foliage and fruitage to the inoculation of Judaic, both Canonical and Rabbinical, elements more especially, howsoever misrepresented they may be (we know that in Muhammad's day Rabbinism made sadly strange work of Judaism), but also of Christianic, both spurious and genuine, elements, howsoever misunderstood these therein show themselves (we know that in Muhammad's time Christians were woefully split up into belligerent sects). Indeed, Muhammad's main and often reiterated charge against the Jews is that they do not acknowledge Jesus to have been a prophet, and against the Christians that they regard him as equal unto God; and, but for these two great charges, both of them, moreover, quite true, the Korân is, as far as *dogmatics* are concerned, almost essentially Judaic or Christianic. If, therefore, the Islam did not, *as regards our theme*, stand entirely upon its own ground, neither directly borrowing from, nor placing itself in direct antagonism to, the documents of either the Old or the New Testament, we should have considered it imperative upon ourselves to postpone the contemplation of its tenets touching suicide, until we had previously stated these of Moses and the Prophets, and of Jesus and his Apostles. But, as the matter really stands, we were of opinion that it would be most fitting to assign, on this stage of our book, a separate division to the enquiry into what the Religion of the Moslemain prescribes and inculcates on our question.

§. 42. MUHAMMAD.

As far as I am aware, Gibbon was the first *English* historian who can be said to have written with industry and eloquence on the character and efficacy of the fiery son of the Arabian desert; and, despite Gibbon's frankly admitted utter unacquaintance with the Semitic languages, we may, I presume, acquire from him as much historical information, accurately collected and critically sifted, as most of us care to gain for bare *outward* purposes. It is true, he has been supposed not impartial, nay, has been reproached with predilection for his Eastern hero, so that Creasy¹⁾ very recently obser-

¹⁾ The fifteen decisive battles of the world, vol. I, p. 227, note in edit. 1.

ved that Gibbon's remark on the check which the Saracen conquest in Europe received by the issue of the battle of Tours (anno 732) is „sneering“ and expressive of „almost an air of regret.“ My own impression from the perusal of the several chapters in the Decline and Fall which bear upon the Islām is not the same, and, therefore, I cannot subscribe to the opinion which Creasy, like many others, has ventured upon; and there are, if I do not err, certain circumstances which may have induced Gibbon, nor unreasonably or unjustly, to write somewhat favorably about Muhammad's person and cause. In his time, namely, it was, no doubt, the tone and fashion to lavish every epithet of scorn, contempt, fierce denunciation or wanton wit upon them. Otherwise, at least, we could scarcely imagine even a Voltaire conceiving so thoroughly disgusting and purely fictitious a tragedy as his „le Fanatisme“, ¹⁾ or a cultivated public eagerly swallowing as poetry and philosophy such a monstrous and outrageous libel upon the man and his followers. Here a sample of its spirit and contents. Voltaire lets Mahomet utter the following words about himself. ²⁾

„Dieu, que j'ai fait servir au malheur des humains,
Adorable instrument de mes affreux desseins,
Toi que j'ai blasphémé, mais que je crains encore,
Je me sens condamné, quand l'univers m'adore.
Je brave en vain les traits dont je me sens frapper.
J'ai trompé les mortels, et ne puis me tromper.“

More profoundly, however, than Gibbon, because more *psychologically* and *spiritually*, in the genuine, broad, practical sense of these terms, Thomas Carlyle ³⁾ would appear to me to have delineated the message and mission of this Eastern teacher of ours. Washington Irving's life of Mahomet is known to me only from a critique; ⁴⁾ and I must make the same confession in reference to the Jewish writer, Dr. Weil's, *Mohammed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre*, 1843. ⁵⁾ Indeed, when we attempt to account for, and

¹⁾ Even Napoleon himself, as Las Cases relates, perceived and disrelished its hidden venom and manifest infamy; and, if even Goethe translated it, he did so solely for the sake of its *form*, not its contents; for, as we know from his biographers, he himself intended to write a Mahomet in which he wished to show how the most sublime ideal endeavors become imperceptibly infected by petty realistic designs. ²⁾ Acte V, scène 4. ³⁾ Vide the second lecture in his *Hero Worship: Mahomet, or the Hero as Prophet*. ⁴⁾ North British Review, May, 1850. ⁵⁾ Prospective Review, vol. II, 1846.

and pass judgment upon, Muhammad and his Book, we must not forget the people or the age, for whom and in which he worked and wrote, and then we shall, haply, discover in him and it much of what is manly and noble, wise and devout. I am, of course, very far from affirming that the kingdom which Muhammad established ever was, or, ever can become, a kingdom of Heaven and of God in Christ's spirit and meaning; but it is also not a kingdom of Hell and the Devil; it is, rather, in many respects simply a kingdom of the Earth and the Flesh, and had in its time and place historical right and moral significance in opposition to the pagan religions against which it *commenced* its operations, operations which were indubitable progresses, even that everlasting truth „One God“, battering down a host of polytheistic falsities and non-entities, and that ever-recurring menace or promise „the Last Day“, gushing like a quickening fountain into the parchedness of sensuous apathy and dreamy thoughtlessness. And I am, of course, still further from likening the son of Abdallah and Amina unto the Founder of the New Covenant; for all parallel between them must yield almost directest contrast. What resemblance, indeed, has the son of Joseph and Mary, found in the temple discoursing about things divine, rebuking Pharisees and silencing Sadducees, walking about from place to place and everywhere working deeds of philanthropy, preaching words of sympathy, insisting on justice, charity, holiness, proclaiming liberty and equality in the spirit of brotherhood and under the dominion of lawful order, standing fearlessly before Caiaphas and guiltlessly before Pilate, bidding his disciple sheathe the sword, holding consoling, enlightening, encouraging farewell-converse with his chosen twelve, enduring the struggles of agony in Gethsemane's garden, walking with the heroism of conscious innocence and triumphant resignation to Golgotha, — and thus becoming unto all who should believe in his doctrine and bear his name an example of loftiest work wrought in humility, of deepest religious wisdom taught with serenity, of keenest anguish borne with magnanimity, and of fidelity to most single-eyed truthfulness even unto death: what resemblance, we said, has he, who had accomplished his work at a period of life when Muhammad had not yet revealed his teacher-character or commenced his religious career, with the man of passions, wealth and power on his hurried flight to Medina, or, among his many wives in fragrant chambers, or, commanding his followers to plant

the banner of his faith on blood-stained plains, or, dictating a book to Waraka, his cousin, or to Seid, his slave? Verily, the key thereto may easily be found, as I think, in the well-known words of yon other sterner preacher in the wilderness: „he that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.“ (John III, 31.)

Yet, we would fain not say that it was exactly a *lie*, either subjectively or objectively considered, when Muhammad claimed for himself, and applied to himself, the title of Prophet; for we must bear in mind that this word in the Semitic languages (*nabi*) does not signify exclusively, or even mainly, a *fore-teller* of future events, in which meaning we generally conceive the Greek term (*prophetes*), but also simply an „*out-teller*“ of the will of the Deity, a deliverer and declarer, an exponent and interpreter, enthusiastic, forcible, and, as we say, inspired, of what he sincerely believes to be the Oracle of God for the Good of Man. But, on the other hand, I cannot help feeling individually certain that it was a conscious and deliberate *falsehood*, and not merely gratuitous vanity or mad superstition, on his part, when he reckoned the Jews among the falsifiers of their own scriptures, because they had suppressed or distorted foretellings of their own legislator and prophets concerning him;¹⁾ and that it was similarly *purely artful design*, when he, taking advantage of the etymological import of his own accidental name (مُحَمَّدٌ, i. e. muhammadon, part. pass. = very celebrated, most glorious), and of the examples of earlier christian schismatics, e. g. Manes and Montanus,²⁾ assumed and proclaimed himself³⁾ to be the Comforter (παράκλητος, i. e. *advocate*, for which he, however, read περικλητός, i. e. *renowned*),⁴⁾ to whose advent Jesus had (John XIV, 26) bid his disciples and the world look anxiously and hopefully forward.

¹⁾ Vide Suras II and IV, but also very frequently elsewhere. ²⁾ We know that Tertullian himself believed in such a future *incarnate* Comforter, and credulously accepted Montanus as it (de Monogam. c. 14): „regnabit duritia cordis usque ad Christum, regnabit et infirmitas usque ad Paracletum“ (i. e. Montanus). ³⁾ Sura LXI, 6. ⁴⁾ Vide Maraccio's exact discussion of this famous passage in his Prodomi ad Refutat. Alcorani, pars prima, p. 27; and I will only add that Cotton in a casual note to a work we shall quote in the next Section, viz. his Translation of the five books of the Maccabees, says that the pseudo-gospel of Barnabas really has in this passage περικλητός, which same gospel is on that account in high repute among the Arabs even unto the present day.

„And Jesus, the son of Mary, said: O ye children of Israel, verily, I am unto you a Legate of God, confirming the Thora, which has been given to you already prior to my coming, and bringing glad tidings of a Legate who will come after me, and whose name will be Ahmed.“

§. 43. THE KORAN.

Whoever has had the patience to persevere in the somewhat tedious and unfruitful labor of perusing the entire Korân, will easily have discerned that its whole spirit and tenor cannot but prove altogether unfavorable to suicide, e. g. the tenets about the divinely decreed goal of life, the similes about the hand of Allah resuming the human soul and about the mission of the Angel of Death, the frequent assurances that „God does not lay burdens upon us which are too heavy to bear“, and that „He has created man and also lets him die again, letting some attain to an advanced old age“, &c.; nay, that general injunction itself of unconditional and passive resignation to Allah's Will which constitutes the very essence and foundation of the religion of Mecca, and has imparted to it its most characteristic and general name (إِسْلَامٌ, islamon, i. e. perfect resignation and devotion to the will of God, whence Moslem, one utterly so disposed).

But, the *only* passage in the Korân itself which is directly referable to our subject as an anti-suicidal commandment is the one ¹⁾ into which we are now about to enquire. This fourth Sura itself („revealed at Medina“) bears the superscription Ennisâ, i. e. Women, because, as e. g. Sale informs us, it treats more especially of all sorts of things which concern the female sex. However, not even — „more especially“ of these, but, rather, chiefly of other, perhaps, still more important matters. Indeed, as it is one of the longest, so it is one of the most beautiful, in the entire Korân, and may really be said to contain everything that is either dogmatically or ethically characteristic and vital in Muhammad's religious system, if system it can be called, as we shall see by and by. But, almost all the Koranic Suras have somewhat whimsical superscriptions, often in

¹⁾ Sura IV, vv. 28—30 inclusive.

consequence of the merely incidental mention of some word or event, often, too, for no clearly ascertainable reason whatsoever. — Every version of the passage at issue I have had an opportunity of consulting, viz. those of Maraccio, Sale, Wahl, Ullmann — I have quoted them *chronologically* — construes it into a prohibition of self-destruction. I will, however, content myself with citing Sale's translation of the entire passage, and merely superadding in parenthesis the other Oriental scholars' versions of the questionable all-decisiye words. „Neither slay yourselves (Maraccio: „neque occidatis vos ipsos“; Wahl: *werdet keine Selbstmörder*; Ullmann: *ditto*); for God is merciful towards you: and whoever doth this maliciously and wickedly, he will surely cast him to be broiled in hell-fire; and this is easy with God. If ye turn aside from the grievous sins: from those which ye are forbidden to commit, we will cleanse you from your smaller faults; and will introduce you into paradise with an honorable entry.“ — In the original, now, the first three words of

Sale's version run thus: *وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ*, i. e. literally: do not slay *your souls*; and the question has arisen among, and been differently answered by, Arabic commentators themselves, whether this prohibition ought to be construed as having *specific* reference to the slaying of the *body*, i. e. to actual suicide, or, ought to be interpreted figuratively and spiritually = do not commit any *mortal* or *deadly* sin, any *soul-destroying* crime;¹⁾ for the mere reference to the chapter on the personal pronouns in any Arabic and Hebrew

Grammar, or to the words *نَفْس* or *נֶפֶשׁ* in any Arabic and Hebrew Dictionary can suffice to certify to us that these nouns, conjoined with the pertinent pronomen possessivum are frequently and almost regularly employed as personal reflexive pronoun instead of the bare pronominal suffix, i. e. when the veritable personality as a spiritual essence has to be expressed, though, of course, they may also in any nexus retain their full substantive power and import and would do so in a mystical, but less naturally in a legal, work. In Arabic, I believe, the former use of the word at issue is even more common than in Hebrew. A certain Jallalo' ddin, now, is in favor of the latter mystical exposition, whereas a certain al Beidâwi understands

¹⁾ Vide Sale, vol. I, p. 99, note, and Maraccio, p. 175, notes.

the said words literally and physically. I individually am firmly persuaded that the latter commentator is in the right, and, indeed, upon the whole, if I may borrow a fragment of erudition on Koranic exegesis which an anonymous writer treats us to,¹⁾ Samakh-schari and *Baidhawi* are universally considered by the Muhammadans themselves the most celebrated expounders of the Korân. However, we will attempt to argue this point in our own way, since, where Eastern doctors differ on matters concerning themselves principally, some little caution and scrutiny seem necessary ere one like myself, with an all but totally erased impression of the language on his memory, may venture to be positive.

1. Figurative mode of expression is, as everybody knows, anything but foreign to the spirit of the Eastern languages, and there are many passages in the Korân itself which seem to be open to a twofold interpretation, accordingly as we conceive the one or the other term, e. g. the word *way* or *road*, allegorically or externally.²⁾ But it is, or at all events ought to be, a law of hermeneutics never to have recourse to an allegorical interpretation, if a literal one can be turned to good account; else, there would be no bar to any amount of artificiality and absurdity. I will give an odd illustrative instance, without departing far from our specific topic. Lavater, in a masterly controversial epistle to the late Prof. Paulus,³⁾ relates that a Mystic once said to him: „thou shalt not kill“ (in the Decalogue) could not be physically understood, because God himself had commanded to the magistracies and priests manifold killing; it, therefore, signified spiritually: „one must not kill one's conscience“ = „do not extinguish the Spirit“ (in the N. T.). Lavater proceeds: exegetically, he could not be refuted; for, on the one hand, there is a passage: „kill, i. e. master, suppress, your members“; and, on the other hand, it yields an edifying sense. Nevertheless, every sensible person must consider this manner of interpretation absurd.

2. The context of our passage does not exactly decide aught, inasmuch as the words at issue stand pretty isolated in regard to their sense. What immediately precedes is a prohibition of spendthriftness and usury, and what immediately follows is a prohibition

¹⁾ Vide the article *Arabische Sprache und Literatur* in the 9th edit. of the *Conversationslexicon*. ²⁾ Vide in Ullmann e. g. pp. 122, 56, 22 and the notes *ibid.* on the relevant passages. ³⁾ Communicated in *Reichlin-Weidberg's D. G. G. Paulus und seine Zeit*, B. I, p. 295.

of envy and covetousness. Also such looseness of connexion is, however, a frequent phenomenon in the Korân (as in most other Eastern books also, if I mistake not). Order, method, coherence, closeness of argument are certainly not the most conspicuous features of the Book; for, speaking quite in general, on almost every page we meet with a sudden, utterly unexpected leap from one subject to another, and even back again to the temporarily forsaken topic, and an altogether unmodified and disjointed juxta-position of the most heterogeneous communications. Indeed, whence should anything like severe logic have come to this self-tutored, yet always comparatively unlearned, Eastern poet-orator of ours? When, therefore, Muhammad, by way of proving in his own peculiarly naïve or artful fashion the divine origin of his Book to his ignorant and uncultivated cotemporary countrymen, innumerable times¹⁾ challenges them to try, and defies them to try successfully, to produce a single sura anything like so good, he, doubtless, alludes more especially to certain fresh and free poetic and oratorical excellencies which, though entirely or partially lost upon our Occidental taste and ear, would appear to astound, enchain, enchant the Eastern disciples of his faith unto this very day.

3. But, nevertheless, there is one contextual point which might, perhaps, be affirmed to go some little way to prove that al Bel-dâwi's interpretation is *very likely* to be the correct one. The main sins — allusion is made to them by the „if ye turn aside from the *grievous sins*“ of our passage — are, according to one of Ullmann's notes (on p. 58), the following seven: idolatry, murder, false testimony, the cheating of orphans, running away in a religious war, disobedience to one's parents, and usury; but, according to a passage in the Sunna (of which work we shall speak in the next §) the following four²⁾ are the great crimes: polytheism, disobedience to parents, *suicide*, and perjury. Now, this same fourth Sura of ours which, as I have already hinted, may be regarded as an epitome of everything that is essentially characteristic of the Islâm either dogmatically or ethically, really does forbid all the *other*, whether seven or four, sins or crimes just enumerated: why, then, not also *suicide*? Which remark, by the by, effectually blunts the point of

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Suras II and XVII. ²⁾ *Grundrissen des Orients*, B. I, p. 315, §. 593.

another suggestion which al Beidâwi makes, viz. that „the taking away of the life of any true believer“ might also be meant by the passage under mention; for unequivocally distinct commandments on this subject are elsewhere in this very Sura, a. g. on p. 112 of Sale's version, promulgated.

4. In this very same Sura too (viz. v. 64, in Sale's version p. 107) the identical phrase — minus the negation — occurs in the *unmistakeable literal* sense: „had we commanded them: slay

yourselves (أَفْتَكُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ), or: quit your dwellings, only few would have done so.“ The meaning, probably, is: go forth into battle to fight for the cause of the Prophet and the Islâm, though at the risk of your (physical) lives, and even with *certain* (physical) death before your eyes. — Manifestly figuratively employed, on the contrary, vide similar modes of expression in Suras II, v. 54, and IX, v. 44, and cf. Maraccio, notae, p. 32.

5. Also the Persian poet Dschelâl eddîn Rûmi, in the 13th cent. of our era, accounted the greatest Muhammadan religious and mystical (didactic) poet, whose chief work Mesnewi has been translated into Turkish and commented upon in 6 folios, as I learn, found suicide interdicted in the Korân; but, if not in the passage we are now discussing, where then else? The pertinent portion of his Mesnewi is, according to Tholuk's rhythmical version,¹⁾ as follows.

Da dem Ziel zu heiß ich streb', thut das Gebot
Des Kurans: „Nicht tödtet selbst euch!“ haß mir Noth.
Süße Körner anzurühren man verbeut,
Bittere Körner schüßt die eigne Bitterkeit.
Weil nun sterben — glaubt's mir — gar was Süßes ist,
Drum auch Selbstmord im Kuran verboten ist.
Süß mir ist das Lobsstorn, mir der Kuran
Kündigt laut: „Lebendig sind die Todten“ an.
Tödtet mich, ihr Freunde mein, schmachvoll, denn wißt
In dem Tode mein, mein ewig Leben ist.

To the reader the following brief notices about this poet and his above-mentioned work will, perhaps, not be unwelcome. I extract them from Hammer's circumstantial communications.²⁾ Mawlana D. R.'s proper name is Mohammed, the son of Mohammed of Balch, who

¹⁾ Blütenfammlung aus der Morgenländischen Mythik, 1825, pp. 122, 123.
²⁾ Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persens, mit einer Blüthenlese aus zweihundert persischen Dichtern, 1818, p. 163 ff.

derives his race from Mohammed, the son of Amam. He is the greatest mystical poet of the East, the oracle of the Sofis, the nightingale of contemplative life, and the founder of the most celebrated order of mystical Derwishes, the Mewlewi. As founder of it, as lawgiver of contemplative life, as the interpreter of celestial mysteries, he is highly venerated in the entire Orient. His very tomb (he died 1262) at Kenia, an object of the devotion of the Mewlewi's, and of the public beneficence of the osmanic Sultans, is still a celebrated place of pilgrimage. The contents of his *Meanevi*, i. e. *double-rhymed* poem, from the banks of the Ganges unto those of the Bosphorus the manual of all Sofis, is throughout moral and ascetic, allegorical and mystical, so that doctrines and contemplations alternate with Koranic legends and other stories. Hammer gives a sort of synoptical table of the subjects of each of the six books, from which it is clear that expositions of various passages in the Koran are not unfrequently interwoven, and he gives numerous passages in the German version of M. von Hussar, among which, however, the above passage does not stand. With versions of his own from Mewlana's lyrical poems (*Diwan*) Hammer fills more than twenty quarto pages, and some of these mystical effusions are certainly very thoughtful and interesting.

6. Finally, there exist, as I think, some a priori external reasons for believing that Muhammad would have interdicted suicide in his Korân, since, as we have already stated, such an interdiction perfectly chimed in with the fundamental elements of his whole Religion. Firstly. We possess distinct historic evidence⁴⁾ to prove that suicide had occasionally, though I know not to what extent exactly, occurred among the pagan Arabs prior to his stepping forward as the founder of a new faith; and, thence, Muhammad could not be withheld from interdicting suicide by the fear that he might draw attention to what had hitherto been unknown to them, or unpractised by them. Secondly. During the time of Muhammad, the Gentoes in adjacent India even committed, as we have seen, suicide as a religious rite and duty, and, inasmuch as the Bramins were, as I learn, at least, from the Preliminary Discourse which Sale has prefixed to his translation of the Korân, an *especial thorn* in Ma-

⁴⁾ Vide e. g. Crichton's *History of Arabia*, ancient and modern, vol. I, pp. 124, 125.

hammad's eyes, it is not improbable to assume — and, indeed, al Beldâwi himself hints at this circumstance — that the Korân would be made to include a prohibition of suicide among the other items of its antagonism to Hindooism, for sheer polemic reasons, if from no worthier motive. And, thirdly, it seems to me not impossible that Muhammad might have heard something about e. g. the frequency of suicide among the Donatists (vide Sect. IV), and thus aimed a shaft also at such fanatic play with life as was carried on by some of the earlier christian sects. — —

I scarcely know, whether it be worth while, before we quit the Korân itself, to state that Muhammad most naïvely and quackishly lets God on one occasion say to him:¹⁾ „You will, perhaps, take away your own life from vexation, because the Infidels attach no faith to this new Revelation; but it would be in vain.“ If I mistake not, also this passage is coined upon an insinuation of the Jews against Jesus (vide Sect. V). Similarly Muhammad lets his coteremporaries affirm of him, as the Jews did of Jesus, that he was *mad*, i. e. possessed by an evil spirit.²⁾ — Still more absurd is a passage in Sura XXII (v. 15) which I willingly leave the reader to excogitate for himself, because I am unable to understand its exact scope and point. It *seems* to suggest suicide to the Infidel as an infallible means of *disproving* to him his own materialistic non-faith in God.

§. 44. THE SUNNA.

But, were we even to subscribe to Jallalo' ddm's interpretation of yon Korânic passage, i. e. were we to admit that the Korân itself observes, more or less like the Old and the New Testament, silence on the subject of our investigation, we should, nevertheless, not be left in doubt about Muhammad's anti-suicidal opinions and teachings. Dettinger, in his contributions to a Theology of the Korân,³⁾ urges upon the attention of students as sources necessarily to be consulted, if one desire to have the Korân itself expounded, expanded, and more closely defined unto one's self, the following three works: the Sunna, i. e. the written tradition about the opinions and actions of

¹⁾ Sura XVIII, v. 5. ²⁾ Sura XXXIV, v. 8. ³⁾ Zeitschrift für Theologie, 1831, Heft 3, p. 1 ff.

Muhammad; the Idschmâ, i. e. the collection of the decrees of the orthodox (earliest) Imams, and the Kijâs, i. e. decisions of orthodox teachers in the first-centuries of Islamism. Of the first of these three the great living Orientalist, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, assures us that it is regarded and used „as canon for the obedience and imitation of all believers“, and he himself has, therefore, considered it worth while to turn several hundreds of its paragraphs into German, no fewer than three of which virtually or expressly condemn and forbid suicide. One of these I have quoted in the previous §; the two others¹⁾ are Anglicé thus. §. 609. „Let none of you (he says) wish for death. For, if he be virtuous, the number of his merits may still be increased; and, if he be vicious, mercy will, perhaps, still be implored for, and vouchsafed unto him.“ §. 691. „Whoever hurls himself down from a rock, in order to kill himself, burns in eternal fire, into which he is unceasingly cast, and whoever drinks poison and kills himself, will in hellish fire evermore hold the poison in his hand and imbibe thereof, and whoever kills himself with the steel, will evermore in hellish fire tear open his belly with the steel.“

§. 45. PRACTICES AND RITES OF THE MOSLEMS IN REGARD TO SUICIDE.

„Will they, then, not meditate at all attentively on the Korân? If it were not from God, indeed, many contradictions would be therein found.“ — „If we abrogate or forget verses, we give better ones, or, at least, equally good ones, in their stead. Know ye then not that God is almighty?“ These are specimens²⁾ of the Korânic auto-critique and self-vindication: with which the reader may compare, if he be thoughtfully, earnestly, and devoutly inclined, the mode in which Jesus defends the high and pure nature of his instructions.³⁾ „My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.“ And, whereas the Korân is really replete with palpable contradictions and the veriest patch-work and jumble, as some of Muhammad's cotemporary anta-

¹⁾ Gundgraben, pp. 306, 304, and cf. p. 145. ²⁾ Suras IV and II. ³⁾ John VII, 16, 17.

gonists¹⁾ justly averred, of the Thora, the Gospel, legends and fables, an imaginative and a shrewd, but a self-taught and an ignorant, man's both very great and very defective attempt at a national religious poem and a national religious code, — who ever tried Jesus' test of rational and experimental criticism, and found it wanting? Investigations into, and cavillings about, so-called authenticity, integrity, and suchlike matters need not bother us here in the least; despite all its own assurances to the contrary, we take for granted that the Korân was not indited by God, was not penned by Angels, was not sent down, either piece-meal or bodily, from the Skies; — and, perhaps, some Muhammadans themselves are of the same opinion; but, speaking of them as a body, one thing has struck me very forcibly, and this one thing is this: unto this very day they heed and obey the instructions and precepts of the Korân far more sincerely and zealously than we Christians heed and obey those of the New Testament, despite all our „Evidences“, „Analogies“, Catechisms and Creeds; and, indeed, not insignificantly or inefficaciously, methinks, has Muhammad assigned the lowest or deepest of the seven divisions of Hell²⁾ unto hypocrites who externally adopt the appearance of having a Religion, but yet in their hearts have none, who profess a Religion in which they do not believe.

Among the many and various proofs of this fact which might here be given the following one alone concerns us now: suicide has at all times been really of very rare occurrence among the Moslems. At least, Hammer in his most elaborate and scrupulous history of the Osmanic Empire, whilst narrating that the Turkish Pascha Chosrew, in the 16th cent. of our era, deposed from his dignity and power, had ended his life by voluntary self-starvation, goes out of his way to make the following remark:³⁾ „a mode of death not unusual among the Greeks and Romans (he might have added: and the Christians), but almost unheard of in the histories of the Moslem, whom religious resignation to the decrees of destiny (might he not have added too: a direct prohibition of their religion?) preserves from the cowardice of death by suicide.“ We are here dealing, of course, only in generalities, and, therefore, this general testimony

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Sura VII. ²⁾ Vide Majer's already quoted *Etymologisches Vericon* s. v. *Hölle*, if I remember rightly. He calls it *Havriat*, *Derk Asfal*. ³⁾ *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, B. II, p. 207. In the earlier larger work of 1828, B. III, p. 232.

of a master-knower in such matters may suffice. That other isolated individual exceptions to the rule may be found, I do not in the least doubt; and, indeed, I remember having myself read¹⁾ that e. g. Khodabundeh, the son of Shah Abbas, poisoned himself, in the 16th cent., that the Grand-vizier Mustapha Bahraktar, anno 1808, not able to resist the Janissaries any longer, set fire to his palace, and thus perished with his adherents; nor do I doubt but that the daily encreasing more intimate intercourse of the Turks and Moslems with the European christians, e. g. with the French in Algeria, and the occasional examples of renegadoes to their creed, e. g. that of Mansur Effendi in the service of Ali Pascha, will gradually inoculate also this crime of pseudo-civilization into them, and teach them, despite their reluctance and slowness to learn, that man may slay himself without any very urgent cause, and still be considered very wise, very noble, and whatever else!

I know not, whether I should, however, here by way of episode make a passing allusion to that remarkable *imperium in imperio*, the order of the Assassins which, founded by Hassan Sabah, called *schetch al dschebal*, i. e. the old man, or grand-master, of the mountain, towards the end of the 11th cent. of our era, lasted scarcely two hundred years, but during that period, not unlike the Jesuits in the bosom of the Christian church, only more honestly avowing themselves Apostates and Deserters (Motasali, Chavaredsch) from the Islamic standard, made a principle and a practice of godlessness and bloodshed. Among them suicide was frequent, nay, in case of need or command, a positive duty, gladly performed: which last point the following extract from von Hammer's most interesting monograph²⁾ will sufficiently prove. „When Dschelaleddin Malek-schah, the Sultan of the Seldschugides, had sent an ambassador, anno 1194, to Hassan ben Sabah to summon him to obedience and subjection, the latter called several of his devotees (*Geweihten*) to the audience. Beckoning to one youth, he said: murder thyself, and he stabbed himself; to another: hurl thyself down from the rampart, and he lay dashed into pieces in the moat. Then the grand-master said to the ambassador whom terror overwhelmed: in

¹⁾ Vide e. g. the already quoted works of Fraser, pp. 250, 223, and Crichton, I, 397, and II, 366, Russell's States of Barbary, p. 333, and Oslander, p. 188. ²⁾ *Die Geschichte der Assassinen, aus morgenländischen Quellen*, 1818, pp. 210, 209, and cf. also pp. 106, 322, 323.

this manner '70,000 faithful ones obey me; be this the answer to thy sovereign.' — When, in the same year, Henry, Count of Champagne, travelled into Armenia, the Grand Prior of the Assassins invited him, showed him his residence, and, leading him about therein, they at last came to a fortress with exceedingly lofty towers, on each of the watches of which two *white-robed* sentinels stood, members of the devoted band of the assassins proper. The Grand Prior said to the Count that these men obeyed him better than christian princes were obeyed by their subjects, and, he having given a signal, two of them forthwith flung themselves from the eminence of the tower, at the foot of which they with crushed limbs gave up the ghost. „If you desire it“, the Grand Prior said to the astonished Count, „all my *Whites* shall hurl themselves in the same manner from the battlements.“

I would, finally, gladly have communicated something about the rites which the Muhammadans observe towards the corpses of suicides, if I could have gained any information on this point from the books I have consulted, e. g. the Mussulman laws, called *Hadáya*, i. e. guide,¹⁾ *Précis de jurisprudence Musulmane ou principes de législation musulmane civile et religieuse selon le rite mâlékite par Khalîl-ibn-Ish'âk.*²⁾ But, having found nothing at all therein mentioned, I am compelled to leave the reader in the same darkness in which I myself have remained. Perhaps, the rarity of the deed rendered a specific law unnecessary.

¹⁾ Vide Hamilton's English translation, vol. IV, p. 290. ²⁾ Vide Perron's French translation in the exploration scientifique de l'Algérie, T. X, pp. 137—319.

FOURTH SECTION.

JUDAISM.

CHAPTER I. THE CANON.

§. 46. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In the two previous Sections, we have had to speak of books sacred in the sight and according to the faith of the peoples among whom they respectively originated and for whom they were primarily intended, and therefore by them sincerely *considered* as divine words, or, words of God, or, word of life, or, that which is (mainly and solely) to be read, though not always titularly *designated* as such (e. g. Veda, science, Sastra, commandment, Avesta, word of life (?), Koran, legendum). But we, placing ourselves upon a different standing-point of belief, treated such writings as mere human productions. And now we come to a certain number of works, legislative, historical, poetical, rhetorical, the origin of which another Eastern people, the Hebrews, have ascribed to the *spirit of God* (*ruach hakadosch*), and esteem as especially and exclusively of binding authority, dogmatically and ethically, i. e. as revealed or inspired by Jehovah. But in regard to these same „Law, Prophets, Scriptures“, too, we see no intellectual or moral reasons that could induce us to accord to them, because they were and remain the sacred literature of the ancient and modern Jewish race, anything *specifically, pervadingly, distinctively divine*. No outward test touching their composition, arrangement, collection, and no inward test touching their language, form, *spirit*, seems to me to place the said (as we Christians call them, *canonical*) writings of the Old Testament in any such light as would render them *essentially different* from any other

set of literary documents of antiquity, created by men out of their unaided human resources for men with human thoughts, feelings, prejudices, and, consequently, laboring like all other written narratives and theories of greater or minor antiquity under manifold defects and errors, and equally with such other histories and systems subject to whatsoever criticisms and objections enlightened Reason and progressive Morality may demand or warrant. What is *peculiar* and *characteristic* in the canonical scriptures of the Old Testament is *relative*, i. e. national, local, temporal, but not absolute, not above and beyond judicious enquiry and just censure. I shall, therefore, claim and use the natural and justifiable liberty of discussing with dispassionate independence those passages in the Jewish Canon which bear, or have been supposed and declared to bear, upon our topic.

It seemed necessary to make this avowal candidly and honestly, because many good and wise persons among ourselves and elsewhere deny, conscientiously and zealously, that the canonical scriptures of the Old Testament may be measured with the same standard, or judged by the same principles, as other so-called mere human compositions. Well, if to *them* such „book-worship“ (bibliolatry) be pleasant, edifying, fruitful, to *me* it has long since ceased to be so, and for many a year now has appeared but a sorry worship, a *slavish servitude*, not a *reasonable reverence*, albeit the majority of the early christians exercised it, mediaeval scholastic catholicism adopted it, the Reformers did not venture to shake it off, and the multitude in youthful dreaminess or aged lassitude still cling to it.

Methinks, it was rather devout than acute, as much else that Luther said and wrote, when this most energetic and successful among the Reformers, despite his antagonism to tradition-worship, image-worship, relic-worship, and sundry other equally equivocal, objectionable, pernicious worships, gave utterance to the following sentiment.¹⁾ „The Bible should be regarded with wholly different eyes from those with which we view other productions. He who wholly renounces himself, and relies not on mere human reason, will make good progress in the Scriptures.“ On what, then, is he to „rely“? And, as to the „good progress“ thus made, its issues and results have verily! been sometimes most strange, from his days up to ours. More rational and acceptable is what James Smith puts forth as his guiding

¹⁾ Table Talk, p. 4.

principle.¹⁾ „I do not even assume the authenticity of the narrative of the voyage and shipwreck (of St. Paul) contained in the Acts of the Apostles, but scrutinize St. Luke's account precisely as I would the accounts of Baffin or Middleton, or any antient voyage of doubtful authority or involving points on which controversies have been raised.“ Exactly so, be the result what it may — Smith's chances to be perfectly orthodox. Manly vigor and clearness in the love and search of truth neither like nor bear to be becalmed, after the fashion and in the spirit of Luther's dictum, on mental and moral life's voyage of enquiry, but, rather, gladly permit, and even court, the storm to whistle, not fearing, though tempest-tossed, but smiling at the heaving and breaking waves, and hoping that a sure haven will sooner or later appear in sight, and open its gates of rest.

That measure which Smith applied to a *historical record* in the New Testament, we shall apply more especially to the *ethical principles* in the Old Testament; in other words, we shall examine into them with the calmest philosophical indifference, without any dogmatical bias, heedless of all catechetical prescriptions, and independent of all personal prepossessions. And, indeed, the writings of the Old Testament Canon require still more accurate and scrupulous scrutiny than those of the New Testament Canon, because they offer greater difficulties, inasmuch as they not only extend over a period of upwards of a thousand centuries, stand considerably further from us in point of time, and are far less kindred to our present mode of thinking and feeling, but also inasmuch as they are composed in a language less generally known and even less easily knowable. — *Less generally known.* The late Professor de Wette²⁾ tells us that a certain clergyman, having preached a very edifying sermon from a given passage in Isaiah, was quite surprised, on subsequently consulting de Wette's translation, at not finding therein aught that resembled the thought or sentiment which, believing it to be divinely inspired, he had recently expounded and enforced with all the eloquence and zeal at his command. He mentioned his astonishment to de Wette himself who, by a due reference to the original, soon convinced him that he had really been enlarging only on some thought or sentiment of Luther's, not a single syllable of which was con-

¹⁾ The voyage and shipwreck of St. Paul, Introduction, pp. V, VI. ²⁾ Vide the Preface to the second edition of his masterly version of the Bible.

tained in the lofty strains of the Hebrew prophet. And, what applies to the incomparably fresh and vigorous translation of the veritable German genius in suchlike work, applies in an almost equal degree to the less free, less spirited, and, if I may thus express myself, also less spiritual authorized version of our Established Church. The more unpardonable and ridiculous it is, therefore, that in the English Universities most young men intended for the Ministry are ordained as fully equipped expositors of the whole Bible, though they should never have learnt a single syllable of Hebrew! What thinking person, then, would give much for *their* homilies and sermons on passages of the Old Testament? No amount of dexterity in writing Latin or Greek prose or poetry, and no degree of ingenuity in solving mathematical problems can avail aught towards the removal of the inconvenience of utter ignorance of Semitic philology; and a clergyman not conversant with Hebrew is just as little fit to sermonize trustworthily on the Old Testament as anybody who had never learnt a word of Latin would be fit to compose a trustworthy history of ancient Rome. — Also, even *less easily knowable*. Almost every Commentary on individual parts of the Old Testament, which distinguished Hebraists and Theologians, more especially in Germany, to whatsoever Divinity school they may belong, now-a-days send forth to the public, tends to prove in a greater or minor degree that there still remain very many doubtful and debateable isolated passages and entire sections in the Old Testament which, even in a mere philological point of view, impatiently await, and imperatively claim, if they are to become *really revealed* to us, from free criticism and sensible exegesis a more thorough and profound analysis and interpretation, and that, upon the whole, much and weighty work remains still to be accomplished on the territory of Hebrew scholarship in the service of old-Testament hermeneutics, albeit, perchance, Justus Olshausen may appear to some and even to most persons over-refining and almost over-despairing in those complaints about the extreme uncertainty and invincible obscurity of some passages and sections of the writings now under discussion which he has given vent to in the Preface to his latest biblical publication.¹⁾ A few of his own words run Anglice thus. „Just as regards the meaning of the words — I have endeavored to separate distinctly what I

¹⁾ Die Psalmen erklärt, 1853, p. II

consider capable of a sure explanation in the text, what of doubtful sense, what, finally, *no longer intelligible*; and among the causes of the extant obscurities the *corruption* (*Entstellung*) of the *original form of the text* has appeared to me a frequently recurring one."

§. 47. THE NOACHIDE LAW.

The Great Flood had subsided, and the depopulated earth was to become re-peopled through the instrumentality of Noah and his sons, and humankind was to start afresh, and to scatter itself anew over the various regions of our globe. At this period of history, if ever, it was of the greatest importance that man should be guided aright touching so momentous a question as the sanctity of human life, and that each individual should be shielded as much as possible against deadly hurt and harm from his fellow-man (and even from the brute creation). Therefore, Jehovah forthwith declared His Will concerning Homicide, i. e. concerning such a deed as deprives the earth not only of one human life, but, possibly, of many human lives which might have issued ad infinitum through the medium of the individual destroyed, in words which, according to our authorized English version, run thus.¹⁾ „And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

This entire narrative about the Deluge and its immediate effects upon the destiny of the human race may be, and, as I firmly believe, really is, a mere mythos (like that of the Assyrian tradition about Xisuthros, the Greek one about Deukalion or Ogyges, and so many other kindred traditions about some great, partial or universal, inundation *manifest vestiges of which this earth of ours, as geologists and other scientific men assure us, still bears*). But, there is, nevertheless, ethical significancy and beautiful consistency in this ancient Hebrew myth, if we connect it with the previous story of deluged mankind, as recorded in the Genesis. Murder had formed no small part of the corrupt practices of those very generations which had just been swept away; for, according to the mythico-speculative

¹⁾ Gen. IX, 5, 6.

narrative before us,¹⁾ „the earth opened her mouth to receive Abel's blood from his brother's hand“, already not long after the reputed diadem of primitive divine similitude (vide §. 14) had dropped off the brow of our first parents, and the cherub with flaming sword was stationed to guard the portal of desecrated Eden against its former inmates; Lamech, too, had to bewail²⁾ „I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt“; and the general testimony borne is that³⁾ „the earth was filled with violence.“ Therefore, lest the degenerate example of the previously departed race should be followed by the few survivors, a new and an emphatic commandment against murder seemed highly needful.

It is a well-known fact that the last portion of the above quoted verses has in modern times been almost invariably appealed to by those members of the christian communities, clerical and laical, who are *in favor* of capital punishment for murder, as a divine basis for their principles, as a divine warrant for their practices. Erroneously, however, as it has appeared to many, and appears to me also; for the entire (divine) prescription would seem to refer rather only to the vindex sanguinis (נִגְאַל הַדָּם, the re-demander of blood), i. e. to impose upon the whole human race an obligation in accordance with which not only the nearest relative, but also every individual, would be justified in slaying a murderer, and which was to remain legally valid, until the peoples should have introduced a social union, made laws, appointed magistrates, and thus have afforded unto human life a still better security. For, at this supposed period of time there were no Tribunals, no Legal Authorities, no „Powers that be“; our Noachide law was, rather, *in lieu* of them, given, as before hinted, unto man in a comparative *state of nature*, as it were, and referred, as we believe, solely to *self-revenge* or *self-aid*, without trial, witness, or judge. At all events, the orthodox *disapprovers* of magisterial or judiciary capital punishment for murder, from Ambrosius and several of his fellow-churchfathers downwards, must, to be consistent with themselves, have construed the verse before us in some such manner. — But, only a few words of verse 5, viz. „and surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it“ (וְאִךְ אֶחֶדְמֶכֶם לְנֶפְשִׁיכֶם אֶדְרֹשׁ מִיַּד כָּל־חַיָּה אֶדְרֹשֶׁנּוּ), can properly demand our especial attention in connexion with the sub-

¹⁾ Ch. IV, 11. ²⁾ Ch. V, 23. ³⁾ Ch. VI, 11.

ject of our express investigation. It is, now, quite certain, but not, therefore, the less strange that all the ancient and most of the modern Jewish Rabbis construe these same words into a distinct prohibition, an emphatic denunciation, of suicide. My first informant on this matter was Selden.¹⁾ „Jam vero priora verba eorum, quae e Genesi citantur seu *tò sanguinem vestrum de animabus vestris requiram*, interpretantur magistri de caede sui. Glossa ibi: *etiam qui laqueo finit sibi vitam* (in hanc legem committit), *licet sanguis ejus non effundatur*. Et Nachmanides illic: *Rabbini nostri locum explicant de caede sui*. Ita alii.“ So far Selden whose further quotations to the effect that the suicide is fully guilty of homicide do not, however, bear upon the words immediately before us. His sole reference is to Maimonides' halach. rotzach. After having long, but in vain, sought for the said tract in those writings of Maimon's which Pococke and others have turned into Latin, I took the liberty of asking a learned young Rabbi where it could be found, and he kindly not only hunted it up for me, but volunteered to translate it orally for me from the Rabbinical Hebrew. It is — this information I give on his authority — in the second chapter of Maimon's instructions concerning homicide in his Mischnah Thorah, and the context would seem, as far as I could with my pencil follow his version, to be about as follows. „Everybody who kills his neighbor with his own hand, e. g. by slaying him with a sword, or by stoning him, or by strangling him, or by burning him, or, in whatsoever manner he himself may have killed him, shall be sentenced to death by the Tribunal; but, whoso hires a murderer to kill his neighbour, or has sent his servant to do so, or exposes him to a lion, so that the beast killed him; and *equally who kills himself* (וְכֵן הַהוֹרֵג אֶת עַצְמוֹ); each of these is a murderer, and has the sin of murder upon himself, and is guilty of death by the Godhead; but he will not be sentenced to death by the Tribunal.“ Maimonides says expressly of אֶת-הַהוֹרֵג אֶת-עַצְמוֹ — „this is the slayer of himself“ (וְכֵן הַהוֹרֵג אֶת עַצְמוֹ). Thus much I stand indebted for to the obligingness of the gentleman alluded to, — and also for the further piece of information that in the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Kamma, f. 91 b), whilst the mention is of self-mutilation, the interdiction of self-mur-

¹⁾ De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta Disciplinam Ebraeorum, lib. IV, c. 1, pp. 435, 436.

der is admitted on the strength of the passage before us, and the argument merely turns upon the possibility of extending the said prohibition also to self-mutilation. The modern editions of the Talmud refer to the tract of Maimonides, and, vice versa, the modern editions of Maimonides to the said portion of the Talmud.

We will now again proceed upon our own feet. Nobody conversant even in the smallest degree with Jewish literature need be told what weight and fame attached to Maimon († 1205) in his day, so that he was styled the *second* Moses; and recent English and German translated extracts from his ethical works, e. g. the Jewish teacher Falkenheim's *Ethik des Maimonides oder Schemonah Pirakin* (1832), and the converted Jew Bernard's selections from his writings, published at Cambridge — both of them, however, very meagre productions — prove that even the lapse of half a dozen centuries has not perceptibly diminished the interest in his writings among his brethren according to the flesh. Also, however, Nachmanides (R. Moses Bar Nachman or Ramban) was an almost equally celebrated Spanish Jew in the 12th century; yet, I have not thought it necessary to seek access to his works,¹⁾ since other testimonies similar to or, rather, identical with, the quotation given from him by Selden, contained in earlier and later writers within my reach, amply sufficed to demonstrate that the interpretation alluded to by Selden is all but universally current, almost undisputedly traditional among the Jews up to the present day. — Rabbi Salomon Jarchi or Rashi, who flourished in the 11th century, and would seem to have been pronounced by common consent the most learned Jew in the science of biblical exegesis,²⁾ comments as follows (B. I, p. 81 of the work quoted at the foot of the page) on v. 5. אֲנִי אֶת־דָּמְךָ: „although I have allowed you to take the life of animals, yet I shall demand your blood from him *who sheds his own*.“ לְנַפְשְׁךָ („on which your life hangs“): „also of him who strangles (erwürgt) himself, although his blood has not flowed from him.“ Haymann does not offer any notes on this passage, but promises some which, however,

¹⁾ He composed a commentary on the Pentateuch which is highly praised by the Jews for its strict rabbinism beside philosophic thought, and therein, no doubt, the said interpretation is to be found. ²⁾ Vide the late Prof. Augusti's Preface pp. XIV—XVI to L. Haymann's *Uebersetzung von Jarchi's ausführlicher Commentar über den Pentateuch*, 1833. Vide also Breithaupt's Latin version, published anno 1780, p. 80, and the references there given.

have never, I have reason to conclude, been published. — Buxtorf¹⁾ adduces the passage at issue as the *sole* authority in obedience to which the mediaeval and later Jews treated the corpse of a suicide ignominiously as that of an impious person. — And, finally, an eminent and influential living Chief Rabbi, whom I need not name, assures us that the Jews of our own time build their religious horror and condemnation of suicide upon the above construction of that part of the so-called Noachide law now under examination. — Nevertheless, but this is the only *dissentient* Jewish voice I have met with, in a recent commentary on the entire Old Testament, Dr. Herzheimer²⁾ concludes his remarks on the words before us with the verdict: „the whole verse shows that the mention is not of suicide.“ Let us, then, now look at the passage for ourselves.

I need not waste any words on the almost puerilely dry and matter-of-fact literality of mind which called forth the clause „etiam qui laqueo finit sibi vitam, licet sanguis ejus non effundatur.“ Rabbinically trained Jews always were and still remain somewhat odd as far as biblical hermeneutics may be concerned, and into their heads still stranger whims occasionally enter than are the guesses, quibbles and vagaries of even our own Christian scholastics, casuists, Jesuits and Mystics. When a point is to be gained, „some legions of spirits may be made to dance upon the point of a needle“, as a certain clergyman of local celebrity not very many years ago assured, in his anti-unitarian controversial zeal, his devout listeners, and, since it is a well-known Rabbinical principle that „on every hooklet of the Scriptures whole mountains of doctrines hang“, old women are, doubtless, never wanting in any Synagogue, as little as they are in any Church, to sanction and applaud any dexterous sleight of mind or lofty flight of fancy in matters theological. However, a very little philologizing will, I ween, suffice to show that the direct and positive meaning of the Hebrew words before us really cannot refer to suicide in the most remote manner even.

קָדַשׁ, to require, to demand from, or to avenge, visit upon: either meaning is equally legitimate, and equally suitable; cf. e. g. קָדַשׁ דָּמִים in φ IX, 12, where the English version has: „to make requisition for blood.“ It is also equally certain that אֶת־דָּמְכֶם is the imme-

¹⁾ Synagoga Judaica, c. 49, p. 705 of edit. 3. ²⁾ Die vier und zwanzig Bücher der Bibel u. s. w. Berlin, 1840—1848.

diate object to this verb, consequently: I shall require, or avenge, your blood. But, what does לַנִּפְשֵׁיכֶם here exactly mean? If the Rabbinical interpretation were the correct one, we should feel tempted to translate thus: I will visit (the guilt of your self-shed) blood upon your souls (in the life to come), thus rendering לַנִּפְשֵׁיכֶם as a supplemental object dependent on דָּרַשׁ. But, as it seems to me, two circumstances, a grammatical and a doctrinal one, make this conception impossible or, at least, improbable. a. דָּרַשׁ is not construed with the preposition לְ, but, as in the next member of our sentence, with the preposition מִן (מִי־דָרַשׁ is, namely, nothing more than a common Hebraism for simply מִכָּל). b. So distinct and definite an enunciation of a future life with its punishments is without aught like a parallel in the books of Moses (cf. §. 3). If, on the contrary, we regard these words as an apposition, an explanatory addition, to דְּמַמְכֶם, the meaning would be: your blood to your souls, i. e. your blood of your lives, as the English version has, לְ being taken as sign of the genitive case, or, the blood on which your lives hang, are dependent, as the Jewish commentator Jarchi has. Cf. v. 4 in this same chapter in which also נִפְשׁוֹ and דָּמּוֹ are placed in immediate juxta-position, i. e. the blood defined as seat of the soul or of life, which is a very usual Hebrew notion, e. g. Lev. XVII, 11: „for the life (נִפְשׁוֹ) of the flesh is in the blood“, &c. The only objection to this interpretation seems to me its tautological character, since the possessive pronoun suffixed to דָּם seems rendered thereby superfluous. However, such redundancy is not unfrequent in the idiom of the document before us. For my own part, therefore, if I may rather choose from among the possible references of these words than decide upon their exact force, I should prefer conceiving them as embodying a *reason* assigned for the אֲדִירְמַכֶּם אֲדִירְשׁ, viz. I will avenge your blood „for your souls“, i. e. for your own sakes, for the good of your lives = that your lives may be thereby rendered more secure (or, „for your souls“, i. e. in return for your souls, life for life). That the preposition לְ may be thus employed as *dativus commodi*, there can be no doubt, e. g. in Job XIII, 7, 8: „will ye speak wickedly *for* God? and talk deceitfully *for* him?“ &c. where (in v. 8) רִיב with לְ occurs in the incontrovertible sense of to argue juridically for a person, to proceed as a person's partisan. — We now pass on to the second member of the sentence before us, and

in this the subst. נֶפֶשׁ evidently forms the point on which the main weight rests. The Rabbis have, palpably, understood it to signify „soul“, i. e. (departed) rational being. But, in this acceptation of theirs they stand marvellously isolated. I have consulted, among the ancients, the LXX, the Vulgate, the periphr. chald. and the versio syriaca,¹⁾ and, among the moderns, Clericus, Lyra, Beer (Lyra, by the by, of Jewish parentage, and Beer a staunch Jew), J. D. Michaelis, the younger Rosenmüller, Bohlen, Maurer, de Wette, Knobel in their respective translations or commentaries,²⁾ and they are unanimous in rendering this noun here by *beast*, *animal*. We then gain the following sense: God will avenge all violent and premature homicide; He will avenge it even on the *brute animal*, and, a fortiori, on man (more especially through the instrumentality of the relatives); for whatsoever (neuter, general, better than „whoso“), i. e. beast or man, sheds man's blood, &c. Consequently, we have here before us solely the declaration of the lawful obligation or liberty of others to slay a man-slayer, and self-homicide is not in the least alluded to. The entire law refers to retaliation, to the *jus talionis*, to blood-revenge NB. *on earth*: and what can suicide have to do with either *Deodandism*³⁾ or *Goëlism*? Of some interest to some readers it may be, if I here intercalate Muhammad's adaptation of this passage in his Koran.⁴⁾ „Kill no human being, since God has forbidden it, unless justice demand it. But, if anybody should have been unjustly killed, we give his relative power to avenge him; but he (the relative) may not abuse the assistance of the law to transgress the boundaries of moderation in slaying the murderer“ — No doubt, נֶפֶשׁ, i. e. something living, really might signify soul; but I doubt much, whether it can be said to occur in this specific meaning in any, more especially prose, passage of the Old Testament;⁵⁾ and, who bids us translate it so in this passage? Rabbinical tradition? That's often only sophistic absurdity. Rabbinical philology? That's generally only clumsily refining would-be wit. The context? Anything but this, as we have endeavored to show. However, supposing נֶפֶשׁ to signify soul here, still, how does suicide come in? If all

1) Vide Walton's Polyglotta, that great biblical work for which Theology is indebted to English money, zeal, erudition, piety, and in which the respective Eastern translations or paraphrases are accompanied by a Latin version. 2) It would be superfluous, I fancy, to give the titles of their respective books. 3) Vide §. 34. 4) Sura XVII. 5) Vide Gesenius' Thesaurus s. v. B, 4.

that succeeds refer to the killing of *another*, as it palpably does, **לְרֵצֶחַ** would have to signify individual slayer of „another“, not „of himself“, and would then do nothing but render the following „and at the hand of man“ senselessly tautological. In point of fact, we should have to re-compose the whole passage, ere aught even resembling a reference to self-slaughter could rationally be eliminated from it. Therefore, it must stand poorly with the prohibition of suicide in the Canon of the Old Testament, if Rabbinism itself could discover it authoritatively only in so arbitrary and capricious a fashion.

Nevertheless, there is a point of view from which also sundry *Christian* writers, both catholics and protestants, have occasionally, but rather inferentially than etymologically, turned the entire tenor or inhold of *both the verses* now under consideration to an anti-suicidal purpose, e. g. Pascal,¹⁾ Fleetwood (as quoted in §. 4), and a later anonymous German essayist.²⁾ The French Port-Royalist thus. „This general prohibition deprives man of all power over the life of man. And so exclusively has the Almighty reserved this prerogative in his own hand, that, in accordance with Christianity, which is at utter variance here with the false maxims of Paganism (?), *man has no power even over his own life.*“ The English Bishop as follows. „For, If I must not shed the blood of *another* man, because he is made *in the image of God*, I must not shed the blood of *my own self*, because I also am a man, and made alike also *in the image of God.*“ And the German Philosopher expresses himself not dissimilarly. — However, reserving for the next § what may and must be said on the material difference between an interdiction of homicide and an interdiction of suicide, by way of demonstrating that the former does not by any means imply the latter, we now pass on to discuss the Mosaic Decalogue.

§. 48. THE DECALOGUE.

The brief words **לֹא תִרְצֹחַ**³⁾ have been variously translated by „thou shalt not kill“ and „thou shalt do no murder“, on which essentially different or not essentially different respective versions we shall make a few remarks by and by. We regard and accept them

¹⁾ Les Provinciales, lettre XIV. ²⁾ Der Selbst-Mord, eine Abhandlung etc. des deutschen Philosophen, 1775, p. 7. ³⁾ Exod. XX, 13; Deut. V, 17.

as coming from Moses, but not as coming from God, not as „graven with the finger of Jehovah“ on tablets of stone, and handed over to Moses amid the thunders of the quaking and cloud-enwrapped Sinai. When, therefore, e. g. Dr. Adam Clarke actually placed ¹⁾ Jehovah, as author of the Decalogue, in the list of the writers of the Old Testament, I cannot but feel inclined to remind the reader of what we have stated in §. 34 on the reputed origin of almost all ancient legislatures, albeit, of course, with such limitations and reservations as a comparison of the relative intellectual magnitude and historical importance naturally suggests and necessarily postulates. The question, however, which we have here to ask and to answer is this: does the above commandment contain either an express prohibition of, or any allusion whatsoever to, self-slaughter?

First of all, some simple historical data. 1. No ancient or modern Jewish writer, as far as I have been able to ascertain, has ever interpreted the commandment under mention into even the remotest bearing upon self-destruction. 2. The Preacher on the Mount, in his glorious and gracious counter-legislation, or, rather, super-legislation, when interpreting its *comprehensive* meaning to a Jewish audience,²⁾ limits himself entirely to its reference to *our neighbour*, does not even hint at the possibility of its application to self-slaughter. It is true, suicide, as far as it is a sin, is *likewise* one committed against our neighbour, e. g. relatives, friends, dependents, or, at least, Society and the State, or, at all events, may be; but the *primary* point of view in which, speaking technically and systematically, it would present itself to us is that of a sin against ourselves. Thence, as little as one would be justified in maintaining that, when Jesus in the said weighty Discourse e. g. interdicts anger against our brother, he meant to imply also anger against ourselves, &c., so little would one be justified in asserting that He intended to include any reference to suicide in his interpretation of the Mosaic commandment at issue. 3. Nevertheless, very many Christian divines in *every* age and section of the church have stoutly affirmed that this very commandment really does prohibit suicide also. I will refer to some few authorities, purposely selecting such as are separated by time and creed one from the other, though they be not all exactly men otherwise

¹⁾ In his concise account of the succession of sacred literature, pp. 7—9, as quoted in the spirited anonymous publication „the Purpose of Existence.“
²⁾ Matth. V, 21, 22.

of much note on theological questions: Augustinus the churchfather,¹⁾ Thomas Aquinas the scholastic (vide the work discussed in Sect. V), the Papal Council of Trent,²⁾ Bunyan the Dissenter and „illiterate tinker“, but a prominent organ of mere popular religious feeling and opinion,³⁾ T. H. Horne the Episcopalian minister and mere industrious compiler,⁴⁾ who is, I believe, still living.

How, then, their argument? Upon the whole, in substance or essence about as follows. Of course, the said *transitively* verbal form (here the Kal) can be supposed to interdict suicide only by deduction, or induction, *implicite*, not *expressis verbis*; for instance, thus: no object at all is added, not e. g. *another*, wherefore *thymself* may be supplied just as well as *thy neighbour* (fellow-man); but, the more general and the more comprehensive the word supplied is, the better, and, therefore, a *human being* is the object to be thought of; and, the commandment being thus directed against *homicide*, one must not kill one's self, because one is one's self a human being. Which same argumentative process suggests to us the following annotations, strictures, and results.

The Indian sect of the Jainas which originated, probably, in the 5th cent. of our era, consider themselves forbidden by divine commandment to kill even the most insignificant living creature, and scrupulously abstain from doing so: thence, their erection of veritable animal-lazarettos, the so-called Banyan hospitals, their purchase of animals intended for the shambles, that they may preserve such doomed victims alive, their constant habit of wearing a piece of linen before their mouths lest they should, haply, deprive some flying insect of life by swallowing it; and the circumstance that one of its members, after having been allowed by a European to discover by the aid of a microscope that water itself teemed with animalculae, actually died of voluntary thirst,⁵⁾ — *instead of finding in this very circumstance a God-given necessary proof of the utter absurdity and impossibility of his pénible creed*. Let us, now, imagine one of these

¹⁾ De Patientia, c. 10, and de civit. Dei, lib. I, 20 and 21. ²⁾ Catechismus ad Parochos, 1566, in a note on the fifth commandment. ³⁾ The Pilgrim's Progress, p. 138 of the edit. of 1840. ⁴⁾ Protestant Memorial, p. 67. ⁵⁾ On these particulars concerning the Jainas vide Bohlen das alte Indien, B. I, pp. 352—358, and cf. also the Institutes of Menu on the matter in general. Something similar seems to be true also of the Mazdakites in Persia, vide Milman's notes and references to Gibbon's Decline and Fall, ch. 42, vol. IV, pag. 88.

harmless mystics entrusted with the office of supplying an object to the Mosaic „thou shalt not kill“; would he not, doubtless, have intercalated: any living being? Nor is, indeed, something analogous altogether foreign to the Christians themselves. For instance, in the 3rd cent. we encounter the flourishing, far-spread, and formidable sect of the Manichaeans who managed to ensnare even an Augustine for several years of his early life into their discipleship and community, and who, on the highest stage of their Gnosis, were bid to abstain from all animal food, and to subsist on a purely vegetable diet. I am perfectly well aware that this law and habit of theirs ramified themselves with all sorts of mystical and ascetic notions (cf. §. 32, more especially on Porphyry) touching the nature and influence of viands; but their express commandment not to kill any animal (such insects as pester man excepted), and Augustine's mode of arguing the point¹⁾ against them, after he had renounced communion with them, leave little doubt on my own mind about their having based some portion of this view or tenet of theirs upon a hyper-exposition of the Mosaic prohibition at issue. (Our church-father, namely, not unwittily, directs their attention to the circumstance that consistency ought to compel them likewise neither to dig up nor to consume the produce of the vegetable kingdom, inasmuch as also plants *have life*, which physiological fact he naïvely demonstrates from certain scriptural passages of the Old Testament.) Let us, also, remember that the Japanese and Siamese make their divine commandment *Se Seo*, i. e. not to kill, refer not only to animals, but even to plants, and the seeds of plants, i. e. aught that has life within itself (vide §. 37).

No doubt, however, the Old Testament itself would easily furnish us with abundant weapons for doing destructive battle against any suchlike imaginary Jainas-interpretation or historical Gnostic extension of the commandment under discussion; for the whole Levitical service, instituted also by the identical Moses, prescribed the slaughter of various sorts of *animals* on multifarious occasions as not only a right, but likewise a rite, of divine worship. — But, not only does the Old Testament itself in such manner sweep away the object „any *living* being“: it, furthermore, performs the same rude and wise office in reference to the object „any *human* being“, in-

¹⁾ De civit. Dei, lib. I, c. 20.

asmuch as the Mosaic moral or civil code not only permits, but literally and emphatically enjoins, the slaying of human beings for various causes and on numerous occasions. To be silent on the circumstance that Moses himself, though „very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth“, as we are assured (Numb. 13, 3), slew a certain Egyptian, by which example, by the by, some of the Hugonots justified Poltrot's assassination of the Duke of Guise,¹⁾ the extirpation of Amalek and other Canaanite tribes, by violence and wiles, by fire and sword so as not to leave a single soul of them alive, is represented as a divine ordonnance issued to the Israelites; the Noachide law of blood-revenge was by Moses still left to remain in force as an institute fully sanctioned by him, and only modified by e. g. the nomination of the three cities of refuge and the fixation of the death of the High Priest as the limiting term of its periodical execution; and, finally, capital punishment, described by Moses himself as decreed by Jehovah, was of extremely frequent application among the Jews.²⁾

But, perhaps, the verb רָצַח has a *restricted*, an *ethical* meaning? Is not synonymous with e. g. הִמִּית, הָרַג, קָטַל (the Hiphil of מָת)? Indeed, Hugo Grotius,³⁾ no mean authority on any question, and J. D. Michaelis⁴⁾ the renowned oriental scholar and biblical interpreter, have, limiting their comparison, however, to הִמִּית, broached a theory to this effect, and made use of this hypothesis of theirs for argumentative purposes. Perhaps, however, such a supposition is utterly unwarrantable, if we look at it more closely (vide §. 5).

Indeed, Michaelis himself on another occasion⁵⁾ admits that רָצַח signifies *likewise* to slay accidentally, and to execute judicially, and this admission overthrows any and every argument he has elsewhere endeavored to build upon a distinctive and an essential difference between רָצַח and הִמִּית, e. g. the following argument in specific reference to our subject:⁶⁾ „also in Hebrew there really does not stand „thou shalt not kill“ (töbten), but „thou shalt not murder“ (morben), consequently, suicide is not interdicted in the fifth commandment,

¹⁾ Vide Raumer, *Geschichte Europa's*, B. II, p. 233 with the references to his authorities. ²⁾ Cf. e. g. Exod. XXI, 12; XXII, 2; Levit. XXIV, 16; Numb. XXXV, 19 ff.; Deut. XIX, 1, 12; XIX, 1; XXII, 26; XXV, 6—8. ³⁾ Annotations in V. T., T. I, p. 28. ⁴⁾ *Moral*, B. II, p. 42. ⁵⁾ *Rechts des Recht*, §. 273, pp. 16. 17. ⁶⁾ *Ibid.* §. 272, p. 5.

since the defenders of suicide might urge that it is only a killing, not a murder, though the Germans be wont to call it so (*Selbstmord*). We, too, shall arrive at the same conclusion, but, as I believe, on a broader and safer path. Yet, were we even to assume that our Semitic verb possesses the said ethical by-notion as an *original* element, viz. such a by-notion as, we contended and proved in §. 5, did not attach *primarily* to the verbs *morden*, murder, we should only see ourselves uncomfortably and unendingly led from question to question, and human laws, differing in different ages and lands, would have to define unto us in what, after all, the veritable *murder* of a „human being“ consists; for the ancient Mosaic legislature is, perhaps, even still less complete and accurate in its fixations on this point than our modern Christian legislatures are. Thus, for instance, the Rabbis, or, rather, some of them — for Eisenmenger adduces also other Rabbinical opinions and dicta — according to that work of this writer's which I have already quoted in §. 11, e. g. R. Levi ben Gersom, are said¹⁾ to understand and represent our *לא תרצח* as signifying „thou shalt not destroy any man of the *Israelites*“, the *Gojim* (Gentiles and Christians) being as such excepted! This is almost too horrible to believe even of Talmudical or Mediaeval Rabbinism; — but W. J. Fox had, certainly, a right to exclaim sarcastically of the commandment under mention: ²⁾ „a law which orthodoxy interprets with at least such limitations as to prevent its interfering either with the *hero* or the *hangman*“; or — he might have added, glancing at somewhat earlier ages of Christendom, — with the *bigot*!

If, then — to come, at length, nearer the topic of our immediate enquiry —, we were to conceive and interpret the commandment before us as directed against homicide in such manner that it includes, or, at least, strongly implies, also suicide, we should, I ween, see and feel ourselves bound in justice to admit the validity of something like the following proposition: as far as the slaying of *another* is concerned, the said prohibition is proveably anything but absolute, allows and demands sundry modifications and various exceptions; therefore, as far as the slaying of *one's self* is concerned, we must, applying the very same standard, also concede the neces-

¹⁾ *Enchiridion Judaicum*, 25. II, p. 210 ff. ²⁾ Lectures addressed chiefly to the working classes, 1845, part. I, p. 58.

ality of equal relativeness, the possibility of similar modifications and exceptions. — However, keeping to the mainly historical character of our Treatise, we will introduce two or three writers of more or less note whose verdicts we cordially concur in.

1. Saint-Cyran. This French Benedictine Abbé presumes and stipulates that the commandment under consideration has, if not expressly, yet virtually, reference to self-slaughter; and the consequence is that, very far from finding in it a clear, full, an absolute interdiction of suicide, he even argues its doubtful, perplexing, relative character into a divine *permission* of the *occasional* rightfulness and lawfulness of suicide. „Le Décalogue ordonne de ne point tuer. L'homicide de soi-même ne semble pas moins compris dans ce précepte que le meurtre du prochain. Or, s'il est des cas où il est permis de tuer son prochain, il est aussi des cas où il est permis de se tuer soi-même. On ne doit attenter sur sa vie qu'après avoir consulté la raison. L'autorité publique qui tient la place de Dieu peut disposer de notre vie. La raison de l'homme peut aussi tenir lieu de la raison de Dieu, c'est un rayon de la lumière éternelle. On peut se tuer pour le bien de son prince, pour celui de sa patrie, pour celui de ses parens.“ He then proceeds to argue that, since such an action (i. e. self-devotion, here already, however, sophistry and blundering begin) is deemed laudable, we must, therefore, assume that it is permissible to do for *one's self* what it is praiseworthy to do for *others*, &c. And Petrus a Sancta-Remualdo, as quoted by Bayle,¹⁾ informs us, in the following words, of the result at which our Abbé, having started from the presumptive reference of the said Mosaic commandment to suicide likewise, finally arrived in his booklet: „ubi attulerat XXXIV casus (sic! but?) in quibus quilibet poterat liberè se ipsum interficere.“ — The previous French quotation I have taken from Voltaire (s. v. Cato as quoted in §. 18), and might do so here for brevity's sake, since we shall discuss Saint-Cyran's pro-suicidal performance somewhat circumstantially in Sect. V as a literary curiosity. Voltaire, as we stated in §. 18, did not by any means intend in this essay of his to enact the part of an apologist of suicide. Nor was he at this moment in that flippantly scoffing humor which induced him to wind up his unmeaning would-be critique on that anti-suicidal passage in the Koran which we have discussed

¹⁾ Dict. crit. et historique s. v. Cyran, T. XIII, p. 37 of the edit. of 1820.

in §. 43 by lagging in a reference to Molière's sprightly, but coarse, comedy George Dandin. We also know that he was as little unskilful in unravelling skeins as he was unscrupulous in cutting knots; but he here, and not without some reason, in sober earnest declares that it would very likely prove somewhat difficult to refute that process of developed argument upon which Saint-Cyran has entered in the little book we have alluded to.

2. Formey. But, though many might decline to bow to the authority of either the somewhat obscure and confused production of Saint-Cyran's, or the above quotation of the wayward and untrustworthy Voltaire, nobody, howsoever zealous, erudite, circumspect in his antagonism to suicide, would be warranted in alighting the opinion of the writer just mentioned (vide §. 29); and his verdict (pp. 192, 193 of the Diss. quoted in §. 3) is to the effect that the dragging of our commandment into any relation whatsoever to our topic would, of necessity, be calculated rather to *weaken* than to strengthen proof and argument against the lawfulness of self-destruction. „D'ailleurs je ne fais pas grand fonds sur cette explication du VI Commandement. Quand même on accorderait qu'il faut étendre cette défense de tuer à l'homicide de soi-même, les Autochéristes y trouveroient presque gain de cause. Car, comme il y a des exceptions à l'égard du meurtre des autres, et que divers cas permettent d'ôter la vie à autrui, l'on dira qu'il en est de même de notre propre vie. Nous ne devons non plus nous en priver que pour bonnes raisons, et un guet à pens sur nous-mêmes est aussi condamnable que sur autrui. Mais ces bonnes raisons peuvent exister; vous pouvez et vous devez préférer l'honneur, la Religion et d'autres intérêts de cette conséquence à quelques jours, tout-au-plus quelques années, de prolongation de vie; et notre existence n'est pas plus précieuse que celle de tant d'hommes, qu'on immole à la sureté publique, et à la conservation de la Patrie. Ainsi il seroit assez superflu de travailler à l'établissement du Précepte positif, puisqu'on ne pourroit le mettre à l'abri de ces exceptions.“

It is true, also other methods of arguing the commandment at issue into an anti-suicidal bearing, besides the one we have just now endeavored to nullify, have been employed. For instance, the object to be supplied to לֹא תִרְצֹחַ is a *fellow-man*; and, inasmuch as we are forbidden to kill a fellow-man, because he stands so near to us (cf. the very terms proximus, prochain, Nächster, nigh-boo in

their etymological character), because we are bidden „to love ~~him~~ even as we love ourselves“ (vide Levit. XIX, 18): therefore ~~we~~ may *so much the less* kill ourselves, inasmuch as we stand *still nearer* to ourselves. Or, — the object which has to be supplied being still a fellow-man, every man is forbidden to kill his fellow-man, and what another is forbidden to do unto us, we are forbidden to do unto ourselves. — But, to what purpose should we dwell with equal patience upon these argumentative processes too? Indeed, we have already in §. 6 anticipated much that might otherwise have to be said here upon suchlike assumptive and presumptive consecretaria, the sequitur of which it is very easy to affirm, but also in no wise difficult to disprove and metamorphose into a non sequitur. Laws must, for obvious reasons, above every other species of literature be read as they have been written, and ancient ones, haply, even more than modern ones must be taken in their nearest and directest, their natural and literal sense. Their import is bounded by their expression, and to tamper with the latter is often tantamount to distorting the former. And who can fail to know that the Bible, and more especially the Old Testament, has suffered more than any other book we are acquainted with from a striving to imagine, speculate, interpret *into it*, instead of *out of it*? Rabbis and Churchfathers, Scholastics and Mystics, orthodox Catholics and evangelical Protestants have frequently done this wrong to it, a wrong which they themselves, however, have been wont to account profundity and estimate as reverence. But, there are such things as *fantastic* profundity and *mistaken* reverence which bear singular and sorry fruits. The fundamental principle and most important element in biblical, as in all other, hermeneutics are *objectivity*, not *subjectivity*; and, if the expositor do not attend to this simple primal rule and law, he is apt to fight the shadow he himself has cast, and to mistake — a wind-mill for a giant.

Indeed, Johann David Michaelis, in his already (§. 6) quoted very erudite, if not exhaustive, work on the Mosaic Laws, though a decided, but sober-minded antagonist to suicide, has not hesitated to declare that „to refer the fifth commandment also to suicide concerning which, nevertheless, not a word stands therein, is a very arbitrary manner of interpreting, about on a par with the so-called spiritual explanation of the ten commandments.“ Nay, not content with the mere negation of the fact, he assigns sundry reasons for

Moses' *silence* on the topic under consideration. Some of these reasons we have adduced and commented on as opportunity offered, e. g. in §§. 6, 14; the remaining one or ones we shall subsequently introduce and discuss. I have, however, not succeeded in persuading myself to assent to them; and, indeed, it appears to me in general a rather unnecessarily bold and a somewhat hazardous undertaking on the part of a German theologian in the 18th cent. p. C. to endeavor to make out *why* a Jewish legislator in the 15th cent. a. C. did *not* give a law on our special subject. We may be quite certain of facts without being in the least able to account for them; backward looking is often fully as precarious a thing as looking forward, unless some peculiar faculty be thereto afforded; and ingenuity easily overleaps itself, when it would fain stretch itself beyond its natural and legitimate reach. But, oddly enough, Michaelis was extremely anxious to make out that Moses did in the capacity of philosophical *moralist*, viz. in the book of Job (vide the next §), what could not be required from him, and what he could not have done with propriety, in his capacity of *civil* legislator (*bürgerlicher Gesetzgeber*), viz. in the Decalogue, or, in any other part of the Thora, wherein it was — thus Michaelis reasons — in general neither his custom nor his calling to threaten with punishments of the world to come, although he certainly knows a future world full of punishments and rewards, and in his books pre-supposes it as known, e. g. Gen. V, 22—24; if he, then, had here made an exception and threatened, in the name of God, punishments of yonder world to the suicide who cannot be so punished in this world as to feel it, this would at all events be an exception of quite especial kind; and such an exception would, whatever one may say to the contrary, be harsh as regards our topic; for in the whole Bible the question is nowhere distinctly decided, because &c. &c.

Also our own Paley, a man of a very different stamp, but equally capable of pronouncing an opinion on the question at issue, though I am very far from according to his book that extreme and supreme value which we Englishmen, with an almost Chinese or schoolboyish reverence and perseverance in such matters, still generally continue to ascribe to it, denies that suicide is interdicted in the Decalogue. The English reader, if he be curious about Paley's ipsissima verba, may turn for himself to his *Moral Philosophy*, where he will easily find them. We have had quotations enough already in this §.

That almost all pro-suicidal writers should in the main agree with what we have stated as our own view, is natural; and not unnatural is it that preachers are wont to indulge in a different treatment, and may be pardonable; for much of what cannot stand the test of logical criticism is available for purposes of popular edification.

§. 49. THE BOOK OF JOB.

In §. 17 already, when speaking of the *Odyssey*, we made a passing allusion to the partly narrative and prosaic, but chiefly controversial and poetical, performance which is now about to solicit our attention. The brief characterization of this work there, and the juxta-position of it with the Homeric epos, may, perhaps, have shocked the feelings of some persons; but, why should they have done so? Juxta-position is not equi-position, nor is comparison identification; but, various earnest and able critics have not shrunk from suggesting that the poem now to be considered grew out of more or less common legends and ordinary occurrences, and was, probably, shaped *ultimately* rather by several hands than by one hand, just as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Nibelungen* and the *Gudrun* are generally supposed to have originated; and, let us remember that nothing is taken away from, or ought added to, the genuine spirit-value of any book by bare classifying nomenclature, that, therefore, the book of Job equally remains the most deeply beautiful and grandly difficult of all the extant relics of ancient Hebrew literature, though we should call it, as Wachler does,¹⁾ a deliberative Epos, or, even as Wolff ventured to do,²⁾ a Novel, instead of, as the generality of writers, a Didactic Poem or a Sacred Drama. — Just, however, because this same book is the most loftily beautiful and the most strangely difficult flower in the wreath of Hebrew lore, theological and philological scholarship has never tired to investigate and illustrate it by searching and circumstantial commentaries, several of which I have entirely or partially perused, but by far the larger number of which have remained known to me only by name: else, perhaps, this § would have grown even longer, than it is likely to become, though it will, I fear, be but too long as it is; for the task incumbent upon us involves the close inspection of several passages.

¹⁾ *Handbuch der Geschichte der Literatur*, Th. I, p. 93 of edit. 3. ²⁾ *Allgemeine Geschichte des Romans*, p. 23.

Starting „in medias res“, the most important passage for our immediate purpose shall occupy our attention first. I shall invariably begin by quoting our authorized version.

I. „So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than my life. I loathe it.“ (וַיִּבְחַר מִחֲנֹק נַפְשִׁי מוֹת מֵעֲצֻמוֹתַי: מֵאֲמָתִי).

Chapt. VII, 15, 16.

None of the ancient Oriental, Greek, or Latin versions, as given in Walton's Polyglotta, construe the above words into an immediate bearing upon the question of suicide. Nor has anything I have ever read induced me to believe that in the literature of the Mischnah, the Talmud and of classical Rabbinism an interpretation in this direction is to be met with. And, as far as English theology is concerned, all I am at this moment in a position to state is that, in reference to the Pilgrim's Progress, as quoted in the preceding §, when Bunyan sat, for conscience' sake, in the unwholesomely damp jail on Bedford Bridge, and imagined, the translated Bible and a Concordance before him, his wondrous book, immortal in British and Human story, he who, perchance (vide Southey's life of him), himself had during the period of his spiritual conflicts felt himself occasionally strongly tempted to suicide, lets Christian find himself *confirmed in his inclination to suicide* by this identical passage, when the Giant Despair attacks him, and counsels him to self-slaughter (cf. §. 17); nor does even Hopeful, Christian's friend, venture to interpret it into an opposite meaning, much less to infer from it a divine prohibition of self-destruction.

Indeed, when J. D. Michaelis turned the passage under mention to an *anti-suicidal* account, he prided himself not a little upon this conception of his as, not only the true one, but also a *new* one, so that we are warranted in believing that he was the first expositor to whom it had suggested itself. I shall quote his translation, as also the translations of those who have followed in the same track, in their original German form; but his and their comments I will turn into English. Michaelis translates and comments follows.¹⁾

Mein Wunsch wählet oft den Strid,
Und alle meine Gebelne den Tod.
Aber das verwerf ich.

¹⁾ Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments, mit Anmerkungen für Ungelernte, erster Theil, 1769, pp. 14, 25, 26.

In the *Inhaltsanzeige* to the 7th chapter: „Job speaks also of temptations to suicide which he resists“ (*widerstehe*, subj. mood); and in his lengthy *Anmerkungen* he proceeds thus. „This is one of the most remarkable passages which has hitherto not been understood in the book of Job, and which is even torn asunder and rendered indistinct by the Hebrew division of the verses. Verily, it must occur to the reader, when he peruses the depiction of Job's extreme despair and of that longing for death which he so frequently testifies, whether he never felt tempted to dispatch himself. If ever a defender of suicide could invent (*erfinden*) a case in which this step might appear to deserve excuse, it would be that of Job who was approaching certain death, but only too slowly, beneath the burden of an unbearable disease which is deemed incurable. And, yet, the issue proved that it would have been likewise in this case over-haste and folly to anticipate Providence, and to inflict death upon one's self, ere Providence thinks fit to send it to us. Nevertheless, something would be wanting in the narrative, if Job were never to let a syllable drop about this dark thought, and did not tell us what he thought of so easy an outlet. If there be any book in the entire Bible from which we may demand a verdict upon suicide, it is the book of Job. What is commonly missed through the fault of the expositors, Job does, and does it in the most sublime and noble manner. Suicide occurs to him; but he rejects the low, cowardly thought, and sustains himself (*richtet sich auf*) by the reflection that, after all, this miseryfull life would not last for ever.“ — Because, however, these annotations of his are professedly for non-scholars, — yet, forsooth, also the learned may profit much by them, speaking of the entire bulky work, and will find them more palatable reading than his utterly tasteless and spiritless translation itself, — Michaelis has not attempted to elucidate and justify the above version *philologically* and *critically*; and some few German divines, e. g. Tzschirner (as quoted in §. 15) and Stäudlin¹⁾ have adopted his view without, however, doing more than merely subscribe to it, and thus somewhat passively sanction its validity. Indeed, as far as my reading has extended, the only biblical orientalist who has made an erudite effort to vindicate the said exposition, without, however, mentioning Michaelis as the originator of it, is the still living amiable and liberal

1) *Neues Lehrbuch der Moral*, edit. 2, 1817, p. 261.

Prof. Umbreit of Heidelberg. His commentary on Job has lived to see two editions,¹⁾ and in each of them he advocates the reference of our passage to suicide, though not exactly in the same words. For the sake of greater accuracy I will, therefore, quote what he says in both editions successively, and commence by giving his version, firstly, that contained in edit. 1, and; secondly, that contained in edit. 2.

so daß Erwürgung meine Lust erwählt,
 Tod von meinem eigenen Gebein!
 Doch, ich verschmähe es —

daß ich mich selbst erwürgen möchte, --
 Tod von meinem eigenen Gebein! —
 Doch, das verschmäh' ich —

His periphrastic introduction to vv. 11—16 inclusive runs in edit. 1 — he has omitted it in edit. 2 — runs thus. „Why, indeed, does God grudge to the plagued Job even sleep which alleviates suffering and sorrow, but scares it away by affrighting dreams and nocturnal visions? Is it not, indeed, as if God regarded him, the bowed-down and weak man, as a wild monster with indomitable strength which to tame one must every moment have heed to? Therefore, *Job would fain himself put an end to his own life, yet he disdains to do so*, since he, surely, will not live for ever, since his days will, rather, quickly have vanished, and thus he has no further wish except that God may no longer plague him more during the brief period which still remains.“ It is, perhaps, scarcely worth while to mention that also the living Rabbi Herzheimer has adopted, in the work quoted in §. 48, Umbreit's version with but slight alterations, and supplies comments very brief and in no wise original or striking to the same effect. His translation runs thus. „Daß meine Seele Erwürgen wähle, den Tod von meinen eigenen Gebeinen. Ich verwarf's —.“

We will begin our examination of these expositions with נפשי which is, of course, the subject, though placed after the object מומן, because the emphasis lies upon the latter word. The translation of it seems of little importance. Mich. wish; Umbr. desire. The latter says: „נפש is here cupiditas, as frequently. The feeling of pain on account of my misery attains to such a degree of strength that a

¹⁾ Das Buch Job. Uebersetzung und Auslegung, 1824, pp. 51, 52. Zweite verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage, 1832, p. 74.

desire to take away my own life seizes upon me." The difference is only one of degree, of intensity; and both versions are, doubtless, perfectly warrantable. Perhaps, however, it would be best to keep with the authorized version and Herxh. simply to the literal original meaning of נָפֶשׁ, and to translate „my soul“, since it is sufficiently intelligible and graphic. Nor is the case essentially affected by Umbreit's second translation „I myself“ which lays, he says, an especial emphasis on נָפֶשׁ; for, I doubt not, in poetical diction we may find several examples of נָפֶשׁ with the requisite suffix employed as personal pronoun (vide what was hinted in reference to the Arab. ⁶نَفْس in §. 43).

Proceeding, however, to the object מַחֲנֵק, it strikes us at once as being of vital significance in regard to our enquiry. Mich. rope — of course, this translation, if the only legitimate one, would at once settle all disputes; Umbr. strangulation. He says in edit. 1: „מַחֲנֵק, Erdrofflung (strangulation), cannot well be referred to God, as if Job wished this mode of death from Him. For, why just this mode of death from God? why not to be struck down by lightning, a mode of death worthier of Him? &c. We must think of strangulation by Job's own hand, to whom on his couch of sickness this remained as the only species of the self-slaughter wished-for.“ And in edit. 2: „It is self-evident from the words מַחֲנֵק and בָּחַר that we have to think of suicide; for the former expression, which signifies Erstickung (stifling), cannot well be referred to God, as if Job wished this mode of death from Him. Why, indeed, just this? why not, more worthy of God, e. g. being struck down by lightning? And the verb בָּחַר in its connexion with נָפֶשׁ designates at least very forcibly (recht {darf}) the own choice of death.“ Herxh. „only suicide, מַחֲנֵק according to the form מֵאֵכֵל, would be still his wish amid such tortures.“ So far they. The first thing, however, to be here considered is the exact meaning of מַחֲנֵק. In Rabbinical Hebrew, at least, the verb חָנַק would seem to be the technical one for hanging, or, at all events, for a stifling by some mechanical force; thus e. g. in the passage Selden (vide §. 47) has quoted from Nachmanides the original of what he translates by *qui laqueo finit sibi vitam* is רָחֹנֵק עַצְמוֹ. Furthermore, in the Hebrew of the O. T. we find this identical verb employed of palpable self-suspension, or, at all events, self-strangulation in some manner. I allude to the

יָחִיב in the narrative of the death of Achitophel.¹⁾ I know well (vide the next §) that some expositors have conceived this verb to admit in the last mentioned passage of a different interpretation, viz. to the effect that Achitophel died *naturally*, was choked or stifled by the effects of vexation, anger, fear, &c., did not really hang or throttle himself: very improbably, however, according to both Christian and Jewish authorities; thus e. g. de Wette and Herzh. translate „und erwürgete sich“, and the latter adds in his comments „erhängte sich“, „war Selbstmörder.“ Nevertheless, these very disputes are calculated to lead us to believe that the derivative abstract noun מָוֶת possibly, *might* designate a death produced by some natural effect of physical disease or of mental anguish: which circumstance shall induce us, before we arrive at any decision, to dwell for a few moments on that disease under which Job is represented as laboring at the time of the above exclamation, viz. leprosy, to which Winer has devoted five pages,²⁾ describing two kinds of it, *white* and *tuberculous* leprosy, minutely. Whilst prudently rejecting the supposition that so pathologically accurate a description can be expected in a poem as in a medical dissertation, he would yet fain conclude from the symptoms detailed in many passages of our book that it was the *latter* kind of leprosy (*schechia mizraim*, i. e. of Egypt) in its *worst* form (thence the epithet עָר, malignant) from which Job was supposed to be suffering. Modern writers, I am led to believe, generally denominate it Elephantiasis, because the scales which form themselves on the skin of the patient are of the color of the elephant's skin. Among Winer's details, now, of the effects of the said disease the following items occur. „Der Trübsinn erreicht den höchsten Grad der Melancholie. Des Nachts quälen den Unglücklichen Schlaflosigkeit oder fürchterliche Träume. Der Kranke fühlt sich übrigens gesund und kann dabei zwanzig und mehrere Jahre leben. Ein Heilmittel für die Elephantiasis ist bis jetzt noch nicht aufgefunden; der Tod erfolgt oft plötzlich, nach einem schwachen Fieber, zuweilen aber auch in Folge einer gewaltsamen Erstickung.“ Which last point chiefly concerns us here. Inasmuch, now, as the fearful sleeplessness and horrid dreams are in our poem frequently alluded to, e. g. chapters III, 26, VII, 4, 13, 14, and Job's impatience of a

¹⁾ 2 Sam. XVII, 23. ²⁾ Biblisches Realwörterbuch edit. 2 s. v. Ausg. Vide e. g. Exod. IX, 9, 10; Deut. XXVIII, 27; 2 Kings XX, 1, 7; and Job II, 7.

tediously and pangfully prolonged life in his present state are, as we shall see by and by, with equal frequency given utterance to: what should prevent us from supposing that in the passage under discussion Job is merely expressing his wish for *suchlike natural sudden suffocation* (מָחֶנֶק) rather than indefinitely prolonged suffering from year to year without any hope of ultimate recovery? Even Umbreit's leaving us the choice between *Erwürgung*, *Erbrofflung*, *Erstickung* might suggest this outlet to us, and I might incidentally remark that the German *würgen*, in A. H. S. *wurgen*, means primarily *strangulare*, *suffocare*, but it is now often, *species pro genere*, used in the sense of to murder or kill in any manner, e. g. in Gall's phrenology the organ of destructiveness is called indifferently *Würgsinn* and *Morbfinn*, and, if I recollect rightly, in Luther's version the slaying angel in Egypt is named *der Würgengel*. — מָחֶנֶק as noun is an ἀπαξ λεγόμενον in the O. T., and the verb מָחַן does not occur at all in Kal, occurs in Niph. only in the already quoted passage, and in Piel likewise only once, viz. in Nahum, II, 13, where מָחַן is used of the lion's tearing his prey in pieces as food for his whelps, i. e. of strangling only in the most general sense of destroying. The radical notion of our verb would seem to be that of being *narrow*, and then of making *narrow*; vide the Greek ἄγχω as compared with the German *enge*, and the Latin *angustus*; and also in Arabic the ἀπήγγατο in Matth. XXVII, 5 is given by the identical Semitic verb خنق.¹⁾ At all events, however, as Hirzel remarks,²⁾ we should absolutely require some adverbial or reflexive word answering to *selbst*, *self*, ere we could be justified in taking for granted that Job was here alluding to a *self*-wrought termination to his sufferings; and this little all-important word stands no where in the first hemistich of the verse under consideration. And, if the above proposed interpretation be the more probably correct one, Umbreit's somewhat peculiar question about God's interfering rather by a flash of lightning &c. would become entirely supererogatory; moreover, I almost fancy that such a mode of *sacred* death, well-known as one of the superstitions of classical antiquity, was not in the same degree, if at all, a point in the creed of the ancient Hebrews.

We now pass on to the immediately following words in the text

¹⁾ Vide Gesenius' Thesaurus s. v. and Freytag lexicon Arabicum s. v.
²⁾ Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament, zweite Lieferung, p. 49.

מִוֶּת מַעֲצֻמֹּתַי, of which Umbr. says in edit. 1 briefly and positively „it is suicide“; and in edit. 2: „but these words of the second hemistich cannot leave us in any doubt whatsoever about the true meaning of the first hemistich. The explanation: my soul wishes rather death than such bones as I have, sounds tasteless. Whoso, however, takes offence at Job's having contemplated suicide, may place the verse in connexion with the מַחְזִיזֹנוֹת of the preceding verse, so that the sufferer is represented as strangling himself in anguishing dreams, as Eichhorn does.“ Herxh. „by my own bones, i. e. by my own hand; or, as Rashi and Ewald: death rather than these bones,“ &c. Thus they. No doubt, the prep. כֵּן (כִּי) may, at all events in poetical diction, be *instrumentally* employed; cf. ch. IV, 13 and even the immediately preceding מַחְזִיזֹנוֹת, where the authorized version has „terrifiest me *through* visions“, and where כֵּן, though one might incline to conceive it somewhat differently, e. g. thou lettest me tremble *before* visions, is, certainly, employed of the effecting cause = originating from, incited by. Therefore, so far Umbreit's version von = durch is grammatically quite legitimate. But, surely, „death by or through my own bones“ is a most tasteless, stiff, unnatural periphrasis! Herxh. explains „by my own hand“; but, why, then, did the author himself not employ this far more suitable, poetical and intelligible mode of expression, if his meaning had really been what Umbr. and Herxh. suppose? Or, can עֲצָמַי or עֲצָמוֹתַי with the pertinent pronominal suffix be used as mere emphatic personal pronoun = e. g. I myself, thou thyself &c.? Scarcely in the manner here required by Umbr. and Herxh., I imagine, though the application of the singular עָצָם apparently or really borders on this signification in sundry passages of the O. T. already,¹⁾ and would seem to have extended and fixed itself in this meaning more especially in Rabbinical Hebrew (vide the examples given in §. 47), and in this deteriorated diction we find a conscious and wilful suicide called הַמְאַכֵּר עָצְמוֹ לָרֶעַת, i. e. one who designedly destroys himself.²⁾ — For the abstract noun suicidium, αυτοκτονη, neither ancient nor

¹⁾ Vide Gesenius' Thesaurus s. v. This scholar, however, reads עָצֶב, dolor, instead of עָצָם in our passage, and translates „mortem malo quam dolores meos“ (מַעֲצָבוֹתַי). Reiske and Good similarly. ²⁾ Vide Buxtorf as quoted in §. 47.

modern Hebrew has, as far as I have been able to ascertain, a distinct composite word. But, also the nexus seems to me against Umbreit's interpretation. If, namely, מרחק designated self-strangling as distinctly as he supposes, then this additional paraphrase for the same thing, the *more general* term coming in subsequently to re-express what has already been *more specifically* uttered, would be, at all events, clumsy, would be, to say the least of it, superfluous, nay, even worse than superfluous, if it be not absolutely unmistakeable. No, as it seems to me, if מות מעצמותי must be conceived as apposition to מרחק, we should do far better to understand כן *locally*, and to translate: *out of my bones*; and I might refer the reader to the use of עצם in connexion with כן in Gen. II, 23, where we find עצם מעצמי וברֶשֶׁר מִבְּשָׂרִי, *bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*. In this case, the sense would be: death, in whatsoever manner, since it would be deliverance out of, separation from, my bones, my bodily existence, this — why should we not admit so touching and true an allusion? (ch. XIX, 20) — scarcely more than skin and bone, body of mine; and we should conceive our entire passage thus: release by natural death, death of any sort (מות), not only the specified most probable mode of death (מרחק), out of my bones, i. e. my emaciated physical encasement. But, inasmuch as כן has proveably and frequently, nay, quite ordinarily, *preferential* power in connexion with the verb בחר, it might appear most advisable to construe it so here likewise, i. e. by „prae“, „rather than“, as, indeed, by far the greater number of both ancient and modern translators have done; vide the former in Walton's Polyglotta, and to the latter belong e. g. Ewald and de Wette. The rendering by „pro“, or, „in comparison with“, also not uncommon, would come to pretty much the same point. Vide e. g. ch. XXXVI, 21, and ψ LXXXIV, 10.

Finally, there still remains the verb נדמה which is likewise of not a little importance, nay, which is of paramount decisiveness, in regard to our question. Umbr. in edit. 1 says: „scil. what was expressed in the former verse“; and in edit. 2 he adds: „thus, at least, a much more vigorous sense is originated than if one take נדמה = נדמה, to dissolve, and explain: I dwindle away, I shall not live for ever.“ Herzh.: „yet, I rejected suicide, because I cannot, indeed, live long more; may, then, God not grudge unto me rest for this so brief period. As the severely tried Job, according to the

issue, would have been dreadfully precipitate, if he had not resisted the temptation to suicide“, &c. — It is, I cannot but think, not exactly the same thing, whether we conceive **דנן** in the meaning of to scorn, i. e. to decline scornfully, to reject disdainfully, or in that of to despise, to lothe; but, I doubt much, whether we are warranted in stating with certainty, which of these two shades of signification more properly belongs to it here. In our book, this same verb occurs four or even more times again, e. g. ch. XXXIV, 32, ch. XLII, 6, and v. 5 of our very chapter. In the first of these passages, it is opposed to „to choose“, and is rendered in our version by „to refuse“, and, whatever other obscurities there may be about the passage, there can be no doubt about this one fact that the verb at issue means to reject scornfully or discontentedly such manner of retribution as God has been exercising. In the second passage, our verb is placed in juxta-position with „to repent“, and is in our version rendered by „I abhor myself“; but I reject it, viz. my former inconsiderate speaking against God, i. e. I revoke it, would be, perhaps, more correct.²⁾ In the third passage, however, appearances as well as authorities are certainly in favor of the above mentioned *intransitive* import of **דנן** which would make it = **דמם**. We have here the words **עורִי רָגַע וַיִּמָּאֵם**, and both verba have been variously understood by different interpreters. Authorized version: my skin is broken, and *become loathsome*; de Wette and Ewald: my skin becomes stiff, and *flows again*; Herxheimer: my skin cracks and *peels off*; Hirzel: my skin closes, and *then* breaks open anew; but Umbreit: my skin returns and is *again rejected*, i. e. scarcely has a fresh skin formed itself over the healed wound before it is again supplanted by a new breaking out sore. The latter writer, therefore, and he alone among the commentators known to me, also in this passage declines to appeal to, and make use of, the identity of **דנן** with **דמם**. But e. g. Rosenmüller,¹⁾ when speaking of the passage which more immediately concerns us, ch. VII, v. 16, where he translates *diffuso, plane contabesco, a. dissolutus sum*, connects it with the following **לֹא לְעֵלִים אֶחָדָה**, *non perpetuo vivam*, and defends this version by adducing sundry examples of the transition of samech into aleph from the book of Job itself, as also

¹⁾ Scholia in V. T., vol. IV, pp. 104, 105. ²⁾ In ch. X, 3, where our version has „despise“ the meaning is: reject, disown.

from other books of the O. T. However, I have not thought it necessary to examine all those passages, and, therefore, will not quote them; but Hirzel, when speaking of v. 5 of ch. VII, says that also in Chaldean both forms, i. e. with נ and נ, occur, and refers us to ψ 58, 8 (7 in the authorized version): „let them melt away (יִמְדָּו) like waters which run continually“, where, surely, in force of the simile itself, no other meaning is possible. Indeed, likewise most of the ancient versions and commentators understand our יִמְדָּו as embodying a further expression of despair, e. g. Syr. I am cut off; Arab. already do I despair; Vulg. desperavi; Schultens: ulceratus tabesco; Clericus: tabefactus sum; and, finally, de Wette in edit. 3: *ich schwinde, nicht ewig werd' ich leben*. Nevertheless, since in our book itself the weight of examples is decidedly on the side of נָמַד in a *transitive* signification, I should prefer retaining this same signification in the passage under immediate consideration; and, then the only question would be: to what does it refer? In the Hebrew text there is no object at all indicated even pronominally, and we are, therefore, at liberty to supply such a one as may seem most suitable to the context. Umbr. supplies, as we have seen, the entire import of the previous two sentence-members, i. e. — according to his interpretation of them — (the desire for attempting and effecting) suicide. Hirzel, on the contrary, conceiving the verb as such in the same transitive meaning, says: „to be supplied is (with Pisc. from the preceding עֲצֻמוֹתִי) *life*, whereby choosing and rejecting,²⁾ death and life form antitheses; Job prefers death in every form to life, which he disdains“; „and — thus he paraphrases the following *לֹא לְעֶלְמָא אֲחִירָה* — if I even could live ever so long, I should not like to do so, so totally tired am I of life, so intensely do I hate and despise everything that bears the name of life.“ Ewald,¹⁾ too, refers the verb in question to „my bones“, i. e. this body which consists still only of bones, and translates: „*sie veracht' ich: will nicht länger leben!*“ — We must, consequently, in order to arrive at some result, choose; and I cannot long hesitate to take part with Hirzel (Ewald slurs over the passage by far too indifferently) who, whilst admitting, as he ought to do, the *possibility* of Umbreit's exposition, would simply insinuate that, as the Scotch juries say, it is „not proven“, and, we may add: also not proveable.

¹⁾ Die poet. Bücher des A. Bundes, 24. III, pp. 104, 112. ²⁾ Cf. *ib.* VII, 16.

Perhaps, however, the reader, gentle though he be, will have ere now grown impatient over this lengthily minute excursus, and ask somewhat astonished: *cui bono*? Answer: we in England are so accustomed still to reverence every sentence and expression in the O. T. that, inasmuch as every word of the above passage came before us in „such a questionable shape“, every word even seemed to court cross-examination. Many a long year has passed away since Hebrew was an eager linguistic pursuit of mine, and I, therefore, experiencing considerable difficulty in ascertaining for myself *the most probable* import of the above Hebrew sentences, have merely let the reader follow me step by step in my own endeavor to render a conscientious account of them unto myself. „*Ultra lexica sapere*“, in these matters, few can pretend to; and all I designed or desired was to place the doubtful points within the reach of the grasp of even the most ordinary capacity. Yet, two things more I will mention, ere we pass on to some few other passages in the Book of Job which have had an anti-suicidal construction put upon them by many expositors, but which, being of minor moment, or, at all events, far less intricate, will require merely a brief analysis, and demand only superficial comments.

Firstly. Hirzel states that, according to the Masoretan punctuation, the translation of v. 15 would be: „so that thou (God) chooseth strangling of my soul, death out of my bones“; and, I may add that Holshausen¹⁾ would appear to have understood our passage in something like this manner, when he translated: „*Abichtlich lässt Du mich vom Erstickten träumen, Von einem Tod, wo ausgeschlossen ist aus meinem Leib der Hauch. Es ist mir einerlei, daß ich nicht ewig lebe; Daß meine Tage nichtig sind, gilt mir gleich.*“ I fully concur in Hirzel's dictum that the said Masoretan sense would be quite inappropriate; but, on the one hand, I am too ignorant of the principles which guided the Rabbis, according to Jewish accounts, in the 5th or the 6th century of our era, in their introduction and fixation of vowel-, punctuation-, and accent-signs, of which the so called Massora consists, to be warranted in venturing upon this field; and, on the other hand, I incline to doubt very much whether it be in the least necessary to convert the patach in מַחַן, which

¹⁾ Uebersetzung des Buchs Job für Studierende zur Vorbereitung auf academische Vorlesungen, 1839.

I find in all the editions I have seen, into *kamez*, as *Hirzel* does, to make the sense he along with most other modern commentators elicits; but *Michaelis* had been far bolder, when he, pronouncing the *ו* praefixum in *וְנַפְשִׁי* spurious, ignored it in his translation.

Secondly. But, among all the ancient and modern translations I have consulted the *Septuaginta* deals by far the most strangely with the words into which we have been enquiring, viz. thus: ἀπαλλάξεις ἀπὸ πνεύματός μου τὴν ψυχὴν μου· ἀπὸ δὲ θανάτου τὰ ὀστά μου. Οὐ γὰρ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ζήσομαι, κ. τ. λ., i. e. thou wilt separate my soul (life) from my spirit, but (and yet) my bones from death. For not always shall I live. We see that the very important *וְנַפְשִׁי* of v. 16 is left entirely untranslated, and that the second hemistich of v. 15 seems altogether senseless, even if we should supply with *Brenton* (vide his English version of the *LXX*) „keep“ before it, he conjecturing that the *LXX* read *וְנַפְשִׁי* for *וְנַפְשִׁי*, &c. Perhaps, he, *Brenton*, fancies that there is some allusion therein to the resurrection of the body! — No doubt, the *LXX* have often really mistaken one Hebrew word for another, unless we should prefer believing that they had copies of the O. T. before them which occasionally differed very materially from our now existent text. One example of this may here suffice, viz. *Zeph. III, 8*, where they, by translating εἰς μαρτύριον, must have understood *לְפָנַי* instead of the *לְפָנַי*, to the prey, of the present stereotype punctuation. *Dähne*, however, in that interesting chapter of his elaborate work¹⁾ which treats of the vestiges of alexandrine-jewish philosophy of religion in the Alexandrine-Greek version of the so-called seventy interpreters, specifies the ἀπαλλάξεις ἀπὸ πνεύματός μου τὴν ψυχὴν μου in our passage as a proof of the translator's knowledge of the separation of the πνεῦμα and the ψυχὴ, a separation so usual and important to all Platonists, and adds in a note: „an alteration of the original meaning of the text might, in general, appear here advisable to the *LXX*, in order to obtain a milder sense, and one more befitting to Job; as, indeed, several alterations have been made from this endeavor to idealize favorite biblical characters, or, at least, to ennoble them, e. g. *Gen. XXI, 9* in reference to Sarah; *ch. XXXI, 20, 26* in reference to Jacob“, &c. — Be this as it

¹⁾ *Die christliche Darstellung der jüdischen, alexandrinischen Religion, Philosophie, 1834, 1835, zweite Abtheilung, p. 59.*

may — I am inclined to agree with Dähne on the point —, what every reader may easily and quickly discover for himself by looking into the LXX is this: that they have handled the book of Job in a more independent, negligent, or ignorant manner than they have treated most of the other books of the O. T., that they have not only frequently mistranslated passages, and omitted words, but even occasionally added one line or a dozen lines ad libitum, e. g. to ch. XLII, 16, ch. II, 9, and at the conclusion of the entire book where a sort of continuation and more complete termination of the story of Job and his friends is tacked on. It is, I believe, the pretty general opinion that the LXX translation of the book of Job is about the very worst of all the LXX translations of O. T. writings; but mistranslations, whether unwitting misconceptions, or wilful misconstructions, whether omissions or additions, are somewhat numerous in the LXX translations of the other O. T. writings likewise; and those who have, in the course of their scrupulous study of the N. T., performed the absolutely imperative task of comparing those quotations of the O. T. in the N. T. which are given in the Septuagint version, cannot fail to be aware how much of confusion and misinterpretation hinges upon the very fact that the writers of the N. T. very often used the LXX as more familiar to the (Hellenistic) Jews and more accessible to the Gentiles than the Hebrew text: let it suffice to draw attention, by way of quoting at once the most weighty example, to Isaiah VII, 14, where מְאֻלָּמָה is rendered by ἡ παρθένος! How strange, then, how passing strange doth it not seem that orthodoxy, which believes in the verbal inspiration of the Hebrew Canon, should ever have so far belied and denied itself as to listen with anything like common patience to the almost inconceivably absurd and demonstrably impossible fiction which Eusebius,¹⁾ quoting from the earlier churchfather Irenaeus, propounds to his credulous readers, when he assures them that the seventy (properly, however, 72) Elders, having each translated separately, found their respective versions on comparison to have one and all of them „rendered the same things in the very same expressions and the same words, from the beginning to the end?“ On which identical occasion, this father of church-history, according to the favorite theological fashion of illustrating and proving one miracle by reference to

¹⁾ Hist. Eccl. lib. V, c. 8.

some other *similar, but still greater, miracle*, informs us that, the Hebrew Scriptures having been destroyed during the Babylonian captivity, Esdras by divine inspiration composed them all anew!!! — By the by, in the present kingdom of Greece a formal synodal decree anno 1835 declared the LXX the only ecclesiastical and valid version.¹⁾ Old Testament exegesis must flourish wonderfully under the protection of such a sanction. —

II. „Then said his wife unto him: dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her: thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job did not sin with his lips.“ Chapt. I, 9, 10.

This is the text of that anti-suicidal discourse of Pearce's which I mentioned in §. 30. I no longer remember in what manner exactly the right reverend father in God handled these words; but I do distinctly remember that the late Göttingen Divinity Professor Less,²⁾ translating „thou speakest like an atheist“, says that Job declares suicide = *Atheism*. The main question would, of course, be this: did Job's wife in the passage before us suggest suicide to her spouse, and counsel him thereto? Augustinus (in his already quoted tract de Patientia) stoutly denies that she did; and Mme. de Staël (in her réflexions sur le suicide) unhesitatingly affirms that she did; but, since, as far as I know, neither the Latin church-father nor the French authoress understood Hebrew, their testimony either way cannot be regarded as very valuable.

There can be no doubt at all about the fact that the verb בָּרַךְ, in the Piel form בָּרַךְ translated above by „curse“ has more primitively as well as far more frequently the directly opposite meaning „bless“, as our authorized version generally renders it, in the sense of „praise“, „extol“. Indeed, the question has been broached, and variously decided, whether this verb ever have really the former meaning. For instance, Umbreit (in the 2nd edit. of the above mentioned Commentar, notes to ch. I, 5) inclines very strongly to believe that it never has, and Hengstenberg³⁾ in his remarks on ψ X, 3 says positively „it never has the meaning of to blaspheme, viz.

¹⁾ Vide Rheinwald, acta histor. eccles. seculi XIX, 1837, p. 920. ²⁾ Ueber den Selbstmord, p. 33. ³⁾ Commentar über die Psalmen, zweite Auflage, B. I, pp. 212, 213.

(~~lāstern~~), refers us to Schultens on Job p. 12 and to (his own) *Beitr. Bb.* 2 p. 131 where, he tells us, is shown that this signification is not admissible even in 1 Kings XXI, 10, the chief passage by which it is supposed to be proved." Gesenius,¹⁾ on the contrary, grounds the signification of „to curse“ or „to blaspheme“, on the application of כָּרַךְ just in ψ X, 3 and 1 Kings XXI, 21, and de Wette and Hitzig, in their respective translations of, and commentaries on, the Psalms, have not hesitated to render it in the first of these two passages by *lāstern*. Let us, then, look at this matter for ourselves as briefly and clearly as we can. The radical signification of כָּרַךְ in Kal is, doubtless, to kneel down, to bend the knees, to make genuflexions, e. g. of a camel, &c. Thence comes in Piel the meaning to „salute“ (thus the authorized version translates it e. g. 2 Kings IV, 23) reverentially, e. g. by genuflexions, by a wish for prosperity, e. g. may the king live for ever (*jehi hamelech leolam*), by a sort of benediction, e. g. peace be unto you (*schalom lechem*). Such a salutation was customary as well when *coming* before a person (vide this verb used of Jacob to Pharaoh, Gen. XLVII, 7) as when *quitting* the presence of a person (vide *ib.* v. 10). In both instances our version has „and Jacob blessed Pharaoh“. Cf. likewise Gen. XXVII, 23; 1 Kings VIII, 66; 2 Sam. XVI, 16; Dan. II, 4; V, 10; VI, 6. Also, when coming, as it were, before God, entering into communion and conversation with Him: thence the frequent meaning of to praise, extol, „bless“ God, e. g. Job I, 21. Also, of God's blessing man and what belongs to man, *ib.* I, 10. Because, now, such was the custom at *leave-taking*, our verb, indisputably, came to acquire likewise the signification of to bid farewell (to give up, as it were, i. e. to separate one's self temporarily, to forget for a while, to renounce, *valedicere*). In this manner we find it employed quite evidently in Job I, 5, where our version „and cursed God in their hearts“ is manifestly far too strong and utterly inappropriate to the context. The allusion, according to the very nature of the case, as every reflecting person cannot but see and feel, must be only to what we should call a transient losing sight of God, a temporary recklessness or wantonness. Nevertheless, though it might be difficult to discover the exact point of con-

¹⁾ In his *thesaurus philologicus criticus linguae Hebr. et Chald. Vet. Test. s. v.* Nr. 5.

nexion, our verb would really seem to have, at least, in one passage of the O. T. the meaning of to blaspheme, to vilify, and, if you like, to curse (= as it were, to take a final, an absolute leave of, to renounce all intercourse with, to part from in a hostile manner, to utter opprobrious and unseemly words against, maledicere). Viz. I Kings XXI, 10 and 18, בָּרַךְ is used in Jezebel's well-known forged royal letter for the destruction of Naboth, the charge against him being that he — as our version has it — „blasphemed God and the King“; and, inasmuch as he was really stoned to death solely on account of this (false) accusation, I cannot help believing that we have here our word employed in the very emphatic sense of: to utter imprecations against, to use blasphemous or vilificatory language of. The passage in ψ X, 3, on the contrary, seems subject to too many doubts and obscurities to be admissible as a proof one way or the other; for equally many interpreters have conceived it in the sense of to bless and in that of to blaspheme, vilify, despise, curse. I allude to the words וַיְבָרֶךְ יְהוָה נָאִץ יְהוָה which our authorized version renders „and blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth“, of which same rendering Stier¹⁾ observes „it is entirely at variance with the usage of the Pi. נָאִץ and with the fundamental idea (v. 13) of the psalm“; but on his own, de Wette's and Hengstenberg's expositions, each essentially different from the other, the reader must be left to consult for himself their already quoted Commentaries.

Indeed, taking all in all, even on purely philological grounds, the weight of evidence is palpably by very much in favor of conceiving בָּרַךְ in the passage before us thus: *bid God farewell*, i. e. renounce him, quit him, cease to put your trust in him, to hope and expect deliverance from him through any immediate, exceptional, and, as it were, supernatural aid and interference on his part. Moreover, this interpretation is, on the one hand, more appropriate than that by „bless God“ to the context as manifest in the pointed character of Job's reply, unless we should prefer conceiving the tone to be *ironical* (= yea, continue to praise your God; but to what avail? all you'll get thereby will, nevertheless, be death). And, on the other hand, it is, I ween, more adequate than that by „curse God“ to the Hebrew conception of the mere thoughtlessness and

¹⁾ Siebenzig ausgewählte Psalmen, zweite Hälfte, p. 244.

boldness of woman-nature in general (cf. the part assigned to Eve in the Mosaic mythos of the Fall), since we have no sufficient grounds whatsoever for intensifying our mental picture of Job's patience by imagining his wife to have been a thoroughly wicked and most aggravating virago, a sort of Oriental Xantippe (whom, we have reason to assume, popular phraseology has also made much worse than she really was). Of course, what applies to her hortatory use of בָּרַךְ must be supposed to apply equally to the prophetic use of the same word by Satan in ch. I, 11: „but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will *curse* thee to thy face.“

At all events, however, the emphasis evidently lies upon בָּרַךְ as embodying the opposite to the previous interrogatory expression of surprise and disapproval, and then מָת as simple imperative of Kal surely cannot be meant to have the specific power of „slay yourself“ (which exhortation or incitation the speaker might and, doubtless, would have conveyed by אָתָּה-נִפְשֶׁךָ preceded by some transitive verb e. g. הָרַג, אָבַד, just as אָלֶה, יֵאָרֵר, would, I presume, have conveyed the meaning of „to curse“ more positively), but rather signifies simply and solely: prepare, at length, manfully for death, await it confidently, meet it resignedly, as the natural and necessary issue of your present disease, since God is in no wise likely, despite all your own innocence and all your praises of Him, to come between it and you by any extraordinary healing potency. (The reader may compare the case of king Hesekiah as recorded in a passage I have already quoted in this §.) But, as regards Job's reply, vide also ch. XIII, 14, 15, where similarly sublime and emphatic words will be found, though our authorized version of them differs considerably from the original. — By the by, in the course of this long discussion about בָּרַךְ, I have not thought it necessary to draw the reader's attention to analogies from other languages. Gesenius refers us to the Arabic and Aeth. words as meaning at one and the same time to bless and to curse; Good¹⁾ casts sundry glances at Occidental and Modern languages, the exact import and drift of which, however, have escaped my recollection, and the book itself I have not access to now: I only remember that his examples appeared to me somewhat inaccurate and confused at the time when I read them. Those who are curious about such matters might,

¹⁾ Translation and Illustration of Job, 1812, notes on ch. I, 5.

perhaps, recal to memory e. g. the Latin *sacer*, sacred and accursed, *valetudo*, health and disease, the German *niederträchtig*, humble-minded and mean-souled, the English *let*, to hinder and to allow, the Greek *ἐπιτρέπειν*, to permit and to cause (vide §. 35), &c.

III. „Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasure.“ Chapt. III, 21.

Grotius says ¹⁾ with reference to this passage: „idem, viz. the non-approval of an impatient self-deliverance out of life, *Arabibus visum non minus, quam Indis et Persis discas.*“ And, doubtless, one may see something of this kind therein, as, indeed, in the entire tenor of Job's deportment; for, more especially if we compare the preceding and the following verse, we cannot, as a matter of course, fail to be reminded that a violent, i. e. a self-inflicted, death was at Job's bidding, and might easily and quickly have been discovered and obtained, had he considered it lawful, and that he, therefore, is here not even so much as thinking of such (cf. also ch. VI, 8—10). So far, so good, and we should have nothing more to remark, if Grotius had not let his hint apply to the *Arabs*, not to the *Hebrews*, a circumstance which hangs together with an hypothesis which seems to have become now-a-days all but entirely exploded, but which several of the Jewish commentators, e. g. Aben Ezra (in his Comm. ad II, 11) and Christian interpreters, e. g. Joseph von Hammer (p. 59 of his already quoted history of the Assassins), have advocated or hazarded, viz. that the author of the book of Job was not an Israelite, but that, on the contrary, this work in its present form is only a Hebrew translation from an Arabic (or Aramaic) original, in which case, of course, the doings and the tenets of some unknown *Gentile* could be of no paramount authority in the eyes of even a Jew himself. I will merely incidentally observe that the above Spanish Jew, in the 12th century, is universally reported to have differed in his biblical commentaries widely by the exercise of rationalizing freedom on many points from the Rabbis of his time, and that his son Isaak became a convert to the Islam; and that Hammer can scarcely be supposed, he being far more an Arabian than a Hebrew scholar, far more an historian and a poet than a theologian, to have examined into this question very carefully. That a Tom Paine (vide his so-called theological works, part IV, p. 55)

¹⁾ *De jure belli ac pacis*, lib. II, c. 19.

should make the most of such a conjecture for heterodox controversial purposes in his letter to the Bishop of Llandaff is natural, but all the thoroughly instructed writers I have consulted seem agreed in pronouncing it baseless, and in accounting for its having been originated and having received countenance more especially, though not solely, by the circumstances that the hero is made an Arab, that the scene is placed in Arabia, and that an historical Job was believed to have been himself the veritable author of the poem.

IV. „All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.“ Chapt. XIV, 14.

These are the words upon which Ayscough preached his in §. 4 mentioned anti-suicidal sermon. The version in the Vulgate „cunctis diebus, quibus nunc *milito*, exspecto donec veniat immutatio mea“ makes these words look almost like a parallel to Cicero's military interpretation of the Pythagorean simile (§§. 23 and 30), and, in sooth, the original (מִלְחָמָה, *warfare*, Is. XL, 2, and then heavy servitude in general, Job VII, 1, 2, and cf. the well-known Jehovah Zebaoth, Lord of *Hosts*) warrants the referring of this passage to the comparison of life on earth, or even in the school, with military service-time, with a mournful watch, until ultimate relief, release, dismissal somehow; but yet, it does not warrant our regarding it exactly as a sort of anti-suicidal locus communis; for the entire context clearly shows (cf. v. 13 and the previous words of v. 14) that the construction is not indicative, but rather only conditional, so that the sense is: I *would* gladly wait, and endure every torment, until *should* come, i. e. if a new, another life were or be possible.

V. „Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.“ Chapt. XIV, 5.

Finally, Tzschirner (p. 130 of the work quoted in §. 15) brings forward these words as being also of anti-suicidal import, without, however, laying so much stress upon them as he does on the above mentioned passages in chapter II and VII. But, inasmuch as the whole exclamation commences with an *if* (אִם), i. e. if his days, if the number, if thou hast, and is irrelevant, unless the following verse be connected with it as an after-sentence: „*then* do thou turn, or look away, from him that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day, or day's work“, — the meaning, doubtless, is merely about as follows: since human life is so brief and so

full of trial and trouble, do not inflict any extra-punishment upon man so that he may, like a day-laborer, have joy and enjoyment in his intermediate hours of repose and recreation. —

But, — we now approach the conclusion of our wearisome wanderings through this Book —, were we even to accord anything like direct anti-suicidal bearing to the five passages we have hitherto discussed: what should we, in reality, thereby gain? Certainly, not a positive prohibition of suicide supposed and represented as proceeding from God, but only, at the utmost, an expression of Job's individual conviction that suicide would have been unlawful and unfitting in him, and, if you like, wrong also in anybody and everybody; consequently: *subjective* sentiments rather than *objective* teachings, *actions* rather than *tenets*. And who, then, was Job? The characteristic tendency of this awe-inspiring justification of the ways and works of the Lord does not in the least necessitate individual historical facts, and sundry features in *that* portion of this didactic drama which is enacted on earth cannot possibly be accepted as veritable occurrences, if we apply to it even a moderate standard of historical probability, any more than *that* part of it which, being located in Heaven with the Ancient of Days, the Accuser of Man, and the Celestial Hosts as *dramatis personae*, is as a matter of course placed beyond the reach of any critico-historical standard whatsoever. Indeed, Jewish orthodoxy itself would seem to have been of opinion, in part at least, that Job is a purely fictitious personage; for — as I have read in Rabbi Herxheimer's introductory remarks on the book of Job — the Talmud says: „Job never existed; it is only a didactic poem“, and Maimonides, in his *Moreh Nebuchim*, a philosophical work of *his*, „doctor perplexorum“, which, by the by, the Rabbis of Montpellier, horrified by its contents, anno 1210 publicly burnt, excommunicating both its author and its readers, says the very same thing. The ultra-orthodox late Prof. Haevernick¹⁾ would, it is true, fain modify these testimonies of theirs somewhat; but they at all events remain substantially on record, and may at least serve to prove to us that the Jews as a body did not consider Ezekiel's well-known mention (ch. XIV, 14, 16, 20) of Job in conjunction with the Jewishly accepted historical persons Noah and Daniel decisive proof of the contrary (the allusion to him as „*sanctus* Job“, „*beatus* Job“ in the

¹⁾ Vide his *Handbuch der Einleit. ins A. Testament*, Th. III, p. 326, Num.

Vulgate version of Tobias, II, 12, 15 would, of course, weigh still less heavily in the scales); nor can I discern the slightest reason for allowing the equally well-known allusion of James (ch. V, 11) to „the patience of Job“ to prevent us from arriving at a similar conclusion, since the Apostle's main object is evidently not to establish the existence of Job as one of „the prophets“ (v. 10), but rather merely to point out the moral of the story which is so strikingly told in this book of ours, viz. the ultimate reward of patience, resignation, submission under great tribulations unto the dispensations of God's Providence. Nevertheless, for my own part I should incline rather to regard Job as a *mythical* personage, i. e. to assume that some domestically tragical event in Arabia or in the vicinity thereof, some actual Eastern simple patriarch-like traditional incident, had originally supplied the Hebrew writer with a germ or base for his narrative, though not for his theologumena and philosophumena, not for that gorgeous religious phantasmagoria which shaped itself woof-like by force of plastic imagination, acute reflection, and devoutest earnestness. The Poet creates, whilst he narrates: such is his office, and thence he derives his name.

But, supposing the subject-matter of the Book of Job to be a mythos, who was the Hebrew author himself to whose anti-suicidal hints we are called upon to accord a somewhat momentous measure of significance? I will limit myself to those very writers who have principally advocated the reference of the passage in ch. VII to our topic, viz. Michaelis, Stäudlin, Umbreit, and they shall suffice to show to us that no satisfactorily certain answer can be returned to this question. Michaelis has said his say, as he himself informs us, on this matter in his *Prolegomena ad Jobum*, in his *Praelectiones* to Bishop Lowth's celebrated work on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, in his *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, in his already quoted *Mosaisches Recht* (§. 136), and in his introductory notices to the first volume of his translation of the O. T. According to him, now, it is, probably, older than the Laws of Moses, was, probably, written by Moses himself during his flight into Arabia, perhaps, for the purpose² of consoling the Israelites who were still groaning in Egypt. Stäudlin, too, has written more than once on this matter, more especially, however, in a somewhat lengthy and tedious essay ¹⁾ „on the

¹⁾ In his *Beiträge zur Philosophie und Geschichte der Religion und Sittenlehre*, B. II, p. 132 ff.

philosophy, the purpose and the origin of the book of Job“, where he arrives at a result, which seems to him himself highly probable, to the effect that our work was not penned before the time of Solomon, and that either Solomon himself composed it, or some cotemporary of his, who had been incited and instigated by his views, and aided by some more ancient poetic documents, perhaps, such as had been derived from the prophet-schools instituted by Samuel. And, finally, Umbreit, whilst leaving the question about the author entirely at rest as one which to settle we have no sufficient data, conjectures (vide pp. XXXIX—XLII of the *Einführung* in edit. 1 of his Commentary) that our book itself was composed during the Babylonian exile, i. e. in the 6th cent. a. C. — Other able men, e. g. Ewald and Hirzel, again more or less differently. —

Thus, *their* surmises, the surmises of erudite, acute, critical, zealous, conscientious men, range over a thousand years, one surmise posting itself at each extremity, and the third midway between them! Can, then, any question, to which such diverse answers may be given, each answer as we are bound to take for granted, not without its more or less good reasons, involve aught of vital importance? The Schools will and must hunt after *name* and *date*; I, however, in my comparative ignorance prefer gazing from yon „and unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding“ (ch. XXVIII, 28), as from a watch-tower, upon the mighty and noble vista which is spread out before us, remembering that on this wide earth of ours I have admired and enjoyed many a bright and fragrant flower, though I knew not *whose* hand had sowed the seed, or, *when* it was planted, or, even in *what* soil it grew and thrived. Much, very much, indeed, of what is humanly beautiful and lofty in the world-history stands before us like, as it were, yon Melchisedek of old, concerning whom we are assured that he was „without descent“, i. e. without a descent which we are able, or need much care, to trace. — —

Though, however, we have dwelt full long upon this so prominent and pre-eminent ruin of Hebrew antiquity, we must, nevertheless, not quit it without having made a few additional remarks upon sundry other passages therein contained, since various christian moralists have drawn them into a connexion with the topic which we are now discussing, nay, have actually placed them in the same category with those which bear upon suicide, albeit they relate only to

Job's curse of the day, of his birth,¹⁾ and to his wish for death.²⁾ We will review them dispassionately and earnestly, endeavoring to avoid several very silly things which the one or the other writer has incidentally, allusively only, it is true, but either scoffingly or exaggeratingly, said in reference to them.³⁾

1. The curse of birth.

If man curse the day of his birth, he manifestly protests against the value, in his own sight, of the particular terrestrial form of existence which has been assigned to him; proclaims, loudly and strongly, that his life as a totality is a gift for which the divine bestower is anything but to be thanked; leads us to infer that, if he had been dowered with a vision reaching into the Future and with adequate a priori power, he would fain have destroyed the principle of his individual vitality in its womb-enclosed bud. We may, therefore, without much hesitation pronounce the curse under mention an emphatic antagonism to, a momentary rebellion against, that Creative Decree which bade him become a conscious Ego in the earth's sphere, a living drop in the great ocean of rational existence. Such a curse is, consequently, as it were, the conception of, and the desire for, the killing of the Divine *Thought* of making him a se, an offshoot of the parental stock that he might grow, green, blossom, and bear fruit, not only for a while, but everlastingly on. It is, if I may thus express myself, the most subtle and sublimated form of metaphysical or prae-physical *suicide*, of suicide ante factum, a word-step in the unmistakable direction towards self-slaughterous action. And, indeed, few thoughtful people who consider the matter *practically*, will incline to doubt that the curse of the day of one's birth presupposes and implies such piercing bitterness, such tumultuous indignation, such dreary woe, such unrelieved inward darkness as might easily lead, and often have led, to actual suicide. Nay, we have already seen that he of Uz in Chaldea appeared temporarily almost to sink beneath the burden of accumulating ills, and that veritable self-destruction seemed to stand tempting before his eyes.

That Prophet, too, who, an eye-witness to the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the realm of Juda, chanted his elegiac

¹⁾ Chapt. III, 1—12. ²⁾ Ibid. 21, 22. ³⁾ Vide e. g. Donne's already quoted work, *passim*, more especially what he quotes from the writings of the (S. 11) Anabaptists and Sextus Senensis; but also sundry other writers of much greater note.

strains o'er their ruins, and o'er the sins and sufferings of his people, more than once ¹⁾ deliberately cursed the day of his birth, when he felt, deeply and bitterly, his own insufficiency for the performance of the great and heavy task which Jehovah had laid upon him.

What, then, shall we say hereto? If we look into the New Testament for instruction and guidance, we must, I ween, say that such a curse is *unworthy* of holy men and (so-called) inspired teachers; nay, also even in the Canon of the O. T. itself there are, methinks, vestiges of nobler moral teaching and deeper spiritual insight ²⁾ than such a curse implies. If true and deep objective and subjective religion consist, as I believe it to do, in the firm and clear persuasion that Omniscience has placed each of us on the stage of time to enact a reasoning and reasonable part in the drama of rational existences, and that All-Goodness will and must lead each of us on, whether through sorrow or through joy, ever nearer to the ultimate goal of that blessedness which consists, and can consist, alone in the utmost possible self-perfectionation: then, such a curse, howsoever heavy the momentary and temporary sufferings may be, is of folly and wrong and evil. But, having said thus much, we may safely add, with specific reference to our immediate theme, that the argument which curse of birth yields in the two instances at issue is palpably rather anti-suicidal than the contrary. Only their speech testifies *against* Job and Jeremiah: their action testifies *for* them. Howsoever desirable, judging from their tremendous and repeated ejaculations, death must have appeared to them, they, nevertheless, bore the fruit of their birth, until the higher hand which had planted their life-tree had let it ripen and fall off; and, inasmuch as they, determinedly and victoriously warring against the impetuosity of their discontent, did not slay themselves, we are justified in believing and inferring that they deemed self-slaughter unwarranted.

2. The wish for death.

That well-known line of Gray's, fondly remembered on account of the extreme beauty and pointed brevity of the diction, „*none o'er resigned this mortal breath without casting one longing, lingering look behind*“, is a deceptive fiction, I ween, an utterance unverified by experience; for many, very many not only *welcome* death, when

¹⁾ Jerem. XV, 10; XX, 14—18. ²⁾ E. g. ϕ XXXVII, 30; LXXIII, 5.

it appears, but even *desire* it to appear, though they may not choose to *force* it to appear. So nightmare-like does „this mortal coil“ lie upon their restless and oppressed breast that „to shuffle it off“ does, in sober reality, seem unto them „a consummation devoutly to be wished for.“ Albeit the Aesopian fable of the woodman may be applicable to many mere death-wishers who are anything but death-seekers — let us think, for instance, of our own Virgin Queen's case during those fits of melancholy which occasionally befel her after the execution of Essex —, it is equally certain that many, like the Danish Prince in the Tragedy, desire and design in earnest to convert their wish for death into a deed of death, that in very many instances actual suicide germinates out of the mere wish to die, and that, speaking with a certain measure of reserve, all despondent impatience of, or angry indignation at, life are like unto feet which stand upon the very verge of the suicidal abyss, and seem more or less ready to take the final, decisive leap.

As Job, so Elijah ¹⁾ too, even he who was accounted great enough to have his character reflected in the mission and efficacy of the stern baptizer unto repentance on the banks of the Jordan, and his name re-echoed at the side of the Redeemer on the Mount of Transfiguration; and so likewise Jonah, ²⁾ when he, indignant that his prophecy concerning the destruction of Ninive should be confounded, unamiably, nay, inhumanly, assails and reproaches even Jehovah himself.

It is not of much moment for our question, whether what is here related of Elijah and Jonah be real history or partial fiction. An impartial reader with some little critical discernment can, I presume, scarcely avoid believing that the story of Elijah is interlarded with and disfigured by numerous legends and extravagances; and, as to the history of the prophet Jonah, we may remember that Luther himself says ³⁾ „were it not in the Bible, I should take it for a lie“, and, for my own part, I prefer, despite the very solemn and significant account to which the feature with the Whale is turned by Jesus himself, considering it not as a veritable fact at all, since as such nothing distinct or definite can be made of it, but, rather, as a parabolic composition, tasteless, but thoughtful, the authorship and age of which may remain an apple of strife among the learned

¹⁾ 1 Kings XIX, 4. ²⁾ Chapt. IV, 3—8. ³⁾ Table Talk, p. 269.

(some of whom think that it is the oldest prophetic work, immediately after the days of Elijah and Elisha, others that it is one of the very youngest of the prophetic writings in the Old Testament), without interfering with the main drift of its meaning which it is not particularly difficult to decipher. At all events, the moral we are in quest of remains; and this moral is, as in the case of Job (vide what we have already said on the passage in ch. III, 21), so in that of Elijah and Jonah demonstrably anti-suicidal. I will analyse the more historical — for we are, doubtless, introduced to certain credible and real features in his character and career — and the psychologically more interesting and explicable case, of Elijah; and what we shall have to advance about it, will apply in the main also to that of Jonah.

If the carnal discomfort and menacing danger of falling into the hands of a wicked and cruel foe, when Jezebel was before him, or the deep anguish of soul from unjust suffering, when he fancied himself alone among the saints, and, perhaps, feared that his own weakness might mislead him into apostacy or negligence, had seemed to him to justify self-destruction, he would have had ample reason for laying violent hands upon himself; for, his piety and zeal for God, according to his own and his people's creed, had occasioned him grief and provoked persecution keener and more continuous than fall to the lot of ordinary, i. e. by far the greater number of, mortals; and, indeed, had he wished to die for the mere purpose of dying, he would not have fled at all. At the moment we are alluding to life had lost its charms for him, a deep gloom had taken possession of his soul, the wish to die was lively and powerful in him; and yet, he did not destroy himself: therefore, he — are we not more or less justified in drawing this conclusion? — considered suicide unpermitted, unrighteous; nay, his later so willing obedience to the commands of God shows that yon moment of despondency and despair was only one of transient weakness, only as a dark and dense cloud passing across the native brightness of his spirit, a spirit even then sufficiently unruffled and resigned to enable him „to fall asleep“, although it had so recently reproached its God angrily, Who — if we may and must speak humanly of Him in this matter — testified, as it were, His displeasure at the prophet's prayer by leaving it unheard (vide, however, §. 15 on the linguistic peculiarity in the wording of that prayer).

And, shall we now attempt to test suchlike gloomy phenomena in the human soul by the bright and pure light of the New Testament, tracking in the human heart the misty depth of the wish that death might come, ere it came, tracing on human lips the plaintive prayer that death should be granted before due season? The Hebrew Prophets as little as the Hebrew Patriarchs, methinks, are fit and fittest Ideals, speaking quite in general, for Christian imitation, and one half of the follies and vices of later Gospel-ages would never have been unwisely and unholy stamped with a pseudo-divine seal, if Fathers, Priests and Parsons could have persuaded themselves that, whatever model-saints and model-sages Judaism and Rabbinitism may have thought proper to propose and retain unto themselves, Jesus and Paul have shown us also in practical respects „a better way“. Yet, let us judge gently, if we would judge at all. Searching into our own bosoms, are there many among us who have not, in the one or the other distressful time and sorrowful mood, valiant and meek though we be, harboured some such wish, uttered some such prayer? „He that ... let him cast the first stone.“ It was, if I err not, holiest impulsiveness which evoked yon well-known „strait“ which led to the confession „having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better“ (Phil. I, 23); it was too, I doubt not, profoundest insight and manliest energy which bade the tent-maker of Tarsus stop short of any and every prayerful summons, and wait, work, war on. Hindoo mystical theosophy may assure us that the Saint neither wishes nor fears death, Stoic school-philosophy enjoin upon the Sage something similar, and our fashionable worldly evangel place genuine felicity in a sort of kindred indifferentism; but — The unwisdom and the impiety of certain *motives* in yearning after and invoking death are, as I take it, legitimate subjects for Schools to investigate, for Systems to elucidate; but, all speculations and prescriptions become micrological and morological, when they would fain penetrate into the silent recesses of soul-life, or lay down laws for the secret emotions of short-sighted and frail humanity. In such Utopias of Spiritualism I do not feel at home.

§. 50. NARRATIVES OF SUICIDE IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

We have often read that the especial mission and the peculiar significance of the Hebrew nation, as regards its position to the other

prominent peoples of the ancient world and to the history of mankind in general, must be sought for in its distinctive Religion, i. e. in its Monotheism and Jehovahism. Nor can any proposition be more self-evident than this. If we believe at all in a Divine Providence as world-ruling Power and Wisdom, we must believe also that this Divine Wisdom and Power marks out and fixes such place and part as each race, large or small, is to occupy and play in the great life-drama of humanity on the great world-stage of history, and presides over and watches over the united destinies and doings of all of them so that, in the courses of the aeons of aeons, they all should prove to have co-operated unto the bringing forth of what is true and noble, pure and beautiful, enfranchizing and fraternizing among men. What momentous work, for instance, the Greeks and Romans, beside the Hebrews the two most gifted, energetic and influential peoples of the ancient world, were called upon to perform and really did perform, we said and saw in §§. 83, 22. Thereunto they were *chosen* by God; they too were, therefore, *elect*. Different was the work assigned to, and accomplished by, the Israelites of old. Still more marked and remarkable was their mental organization and moral idiosyncrasy, because still more specific and characteristic their spiritual task which manifestly was that of preserving in a special measure within their narrow limits Monotheism, amid and despite the idolatrous fictions of surrounding nations, and of cultivating, howsoever imperfectly and puerilely, some insight into and experience of the holiness and tenderness of a Personal Deity, a Just Judge, a Merciful Redeemer, amid and despite the impure practices of environing lands. If we could doubt the loftiness and importance of the said task, we need only remember that, after all, the flower of Christianity budded, burst open and unfolded itself, in part at least, out of Judaism, after the latter had ripened even unto its natural death; for what of vitality it has since then striven to assert is merely artificial, spiritless, sepulchral, spectral.

Nevertheless, we must be on our guard against regarding the ancient Jews, which thing they themselves and but too many others do, as *therefore* either a specifically chosen or a particularly religious people. They were, as I take it, neither the one nor the other. a. *Not specifically chosen*, though the unvaried, ever-recurring refrain of every main portion of the utterances of the Jewish legislators, judges, kings, prophets and historians is this: Israel is *per excellence* the chosen

people of God! Nay, whosoever will ponder impartially innumerable passages of the most ancient and valued writings of the O. T. (e. g. Deut. VII, 3, 6, 16, 22; XXXII, 48) can scarcely fail to discern and admit that the very Mosaic economy itself of necessity rendered the Jews in times of old already pre-eminently egoistical, narrow-minded, vain, and intolerant, aye, more or less hostile to every other race upon the earth, so that even all the fearful humiliations and degradations to which they have been doomed in the course of ages have proved insufficient to uproot in them to this very day a certain melancholy and ridiculous amount of monstrously vain-glorious consciousness of a primitive distinctiveness and of connate marks of prerogative and superiority. Whether the pious zeal which originated the said Mosaic economy might not have existed, and whether the many valuable purposes aimed at by it might not have been effected without this self-deceptive boast and pride, I cannot pretend to say. *b. Not particularly religious.* Looking at their natural character and national history, the Hebrew people in the times of the O. T. have ever appeared to me well nigh the most ignoble and unamiable race I have any conception of. Sensuality and levity, deceitfulness and dishonesty, obstinacy and perverseness, cowardliness and sycophancy, vindictiveness and cruelty prominently exhibit themselves in almost every scene of its shifting and varied life-drama; and not only do we, as it seems to me, look in vain for that soulful and ennobling popular life among them which we find in certain periods and features of antique classical story, but we also search in vain for such individual examples of glorious and winsome men and women as occasionally present themselves to us among the ancient Greeks and Romans. I am well aware that orthodoxy of every complexion is anxious to account for these facts, as far as it allows them to be facts, by assuming that the authors of the O. T. relate with a sort of peculiar and pre-eminent singleness of heart and eye likewise the Evil and the Folly of which even the best and the wisest of their national heroes and heroines had rendered themselves guilty, and quickly draws from such sincerity and naiveté the following twofold edifying inference: firstly, a convincing proof that truth, though at the expense of their own sympathies with, and predilections for, the glory and dignity of their own people, was their only aim; and, secondly, a manifestation of their serious and sacred endeavor to open man's eyes to the sinfulness of poor human nature, and to en-

courage him to hope for, and to confide in, Divine Mercy, in spite of such manifold transgressions and short-comings as are chargeable even on the very saints and elect. But, if I mistake not, a double objection to these inferential theories may most justly be made. Firstly, my impression is — I, of course, cannot now stop to enter into particulars — that by far the greater number of the profane classical historians have not written in an essentially different, a diametrically opposite manner, have not wilfully and wittingly cloaked or concealed the failings and foibles of those among their ancestral or cotemporary fellow-countrymen who appeared to them heroes and models, have not composed rather fictitious panegyrics upon than genuine histories of their respective peoples. Secondly — and this is the point at which we more directly wished to arrive for our immediate purpose —, we are anything but warranted in taking for granted that, when the historians of the O. T. recount to us that e. g. (signal examples) even an Abraham more than once lied, and even a Jacob more than once cheated, these same actions of those Forefathers, in honor of whom Jehovah himself was called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, appeared to them, the historians, vicious or criminal at all, let alone as vicious and criminal as they cannot but appear to those among us who measure them by the more rigorously ethical and delicately religious Christian standard. On the contrary, it is from the tone and coloring of their narrations perfectly clear that in very many instances they meant to approve of and commend much that *we now* cannot but conscientiously and absolutely repudiate and condemn. — Which few general remarks (though they are by no means to disincline us to recognize and appreciate such traits and touches of refining discernment, intellectual depth, tender piety, absorbing humility, devout aspiration, heroic fidelity, burning zeal as occasionally shape and utter themselves on the pages of Hebrew Writ) may, on the one hand, testify to my own individual impression that Jewish historiography really does not present us with characters so noble and pure, mentally so profound and morally so grand as are some of the characters in Greek and Roman story (Joseph would seem to me about the most spotless one); and will, on the other hand, enable us to understand aright the light in which the historical books of the Canon of the O. T. place the *comparatively few* cases of suicide which are therein recorded, probably, because they are cases of persons of more or less

„mark and likelihood“, so that we should, of course, not be justified in inferring that they were the *only* ones which occurred among the Hebrew people during those cycles of centuries over the story of which their canonical records range.

There are five in all; but, two of these five I shall briefly mention merely for the sake of completeness, since they neither afford any veritable material to doctrinize upon, nor offer any real difficulties to the general reader. I allude to Abimelech (Judges IX, 53, 54, as compared with 2 Sam. XI, 21) and Zimri (1 Kings XVI, 9—18). On the former case vide what has been already said in §. 10; all I have here to add is that the statement as given in the book of Samuel about his death is so far imperfect and only half-true as it cannot be ascribed to the woman *only*, though we may and, perhaps, must take for granted that the wound he had received had so far disabled him as to render him momentarily too weak to finish himself off with his own sword, so that the armour-bearer's fulfilment of his last request was not of much real moment, the previously inflicted wound being already *mortal*; the latter case is simply thus: Zimri, captain to Elah, King over the realm of Israel in the 9th century, slew his royal master, whilst the latter lay intoxicated, and took violent possession of the throne. But, the army having proclaimed Omri, its captain, King, Zimri after a very few days of royalty set fire to the palace at Tirzah, and thus put an end to his own life. Neither of these two suicides is lauded in the documents before us; but, if Abimelech's cruelty and Zimri's treachery might be supposed to have forbidden aught like laudation, their respective exits are not even commented on at all. — The remaining three cases, however, Samson, Saul, Achitophel, are in various aspects so peculiar and significant that we see ourselves called upon to subject each of them to a more or less minute analysis, inasmuch as they are calculated to supply valuable contributions to the history not only of Hebrew Ethics, but also, as we shall learn in ch. IV of this Section, to that of Hebrew Laws in reference to our topic.

I. Samson (Judges XVI, 30).

The Jews themselves, according to Calmet as quoted in §. 10, place the death of Samson in the same category with the deaths of Saul and Razis, and, since the two latter were unquestionably suicidal, it follows that they regard also the former as veritably suicidal. The Rabbis, moreover, that writer informs us, pronounce it

not only justifiable, but even meritorious; and a more trustworthy authority, Grotius, acquaints us (as quoted in §. 49) with the exact ground of the said Rabbinical approval and commendation. „Nonnulli tamen Hebraeorum de lege se non interficiendi unam causam excipiunt, tanquam εἰλογον ἐξαγωγῇν, si quis videat, se deinceps victurum in probrum ipsius Dei. Nam quia non nobis, sed Deo, in vitam nostram jus esse statuunt (ut recte Josephus suos edocet), existimant, praesumptam Dei voluntatem solam esse, quae mortis anticipandae consilium absolvat. Atque huc referunt Sampsonis exemplum, *quia in suo corpore veram religionem videbat esse derisum*, et Saulis, tertium est exemplum Razis“, &c. The „nonnulli“, as Grotius himself explains a little further on, means, not that some Jews were unfavorable to the above cases of Samson, Saul, and Rasis, but that some of them were favorable to suicide also under other circumstances. Also Josephus¹⁾ pronounces the courage and magnanimity displayed by the death of Samson worthy of admiration, though on more human grounds, partly private, partly patriotic ones. And, — this is our main question — were they not warranted in pronouncing the said verdict on the authority of the author of the book of Judges who represents Samson's birth as announced by, his childhood as dedicated to, his manhood as invigorated, his death as aided by, Jehovah, who represents Jehovah's spirit as animating him and working through him, as having elected and ruled him to inflict all possible mischievous, treacherous, vindictive injury upon the enemies of Israel, the Philistines? Who, then, may venture to assert that the writer of that book in which all this is distinctly and emphatically affirmed, detailed, urged, even so much as dreamt of even so much as suggesting that Samson's suicidal end was in aught morally censureable, was in any wise displeasing unto God? Yet, if anybody should take offence at such moral obliquity (it would be in vain, methinks, to endeavor to elevate Samson's case into one of self-devotion on religious or patriotic grounds; for it is essentially devoid of every such element of nobleness and disinterestedness as would tend thereto) on the part of our Jewish historian, we would desire to learn, whether sundry other and still stronger proofs of fallacy and fatuity in matters ethical cannot be brought home to the writer in question. Or, is not suicide, when the destruction of many

¹⁾ Ant. Jud. lib. V, c. 8, §. 12: Θαρσύνειν — παλεσίαις.

national enemies is thereby effected, i. e. „suicide and murder united“, at least fully as pure and noble as the deliberate and wily assassination of one's country's foes, nay, rather more so? Nevertheless, it is said of Ehud who with the words „I have a message from God unto thee“ thrust his secreted dagger into Eglon's body, that „the Lord raised them up a deliverer in him“ (Ch. III, 15); and of Jael who, treading softly, smote a nail into the temples of Sisera, whilst he lay asleep as bidden guest in her own tent, Deborah, the *prophetess*, consequently a person supposed to be under especial divine guidance, sings „blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Hebrew the Kenite be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent“ (Ch. V, 24). We, therefore, aver without astonishment as without hesitation that the author of the book of Judges, whoever he may have been, *indirectly* and *implicitly* extols the manner and method of Samson's suicide in unqualified language, and that this is so self-evident a fact as not to require being insisted upon further here; moreover, we can perfectly well understand that it should have been so, and in a fashion even appreciate this view of the matter, i. e. if we take into consideration the one-sided standpoint and the imperfect character of Jewish ethics in general, and in particular the rude and crude state of Jewish insight and culture at yon remote semi-mythical period of time. We, therefore, on the one hand, utterly deny, as far as Samson is concerned, the truth of Less's allegation: ¹⁾ „man setze noch hinzu, daß alle diejenigen, welche die Bibel als Selbstmörder aufgestellt, Samson, Saul, Achitophel und Judas der Verräther, werden auch als Selbstmörder gebrandmarkt“; and, on the other hand, willingly subscribe to Niemeyer's pithy verdict, ²⁾ „daß es eben so vernünftig wäre, ein unethisches Leben durch Samson's Ausschweifung vertheidigen zu wollen, als Samson's Selbstmord rechtfertigen zu wollen nach unsern Begriffen von Sittlichkeit.“

Having said thus much, we will now proceed to test the arguments of those christian moralists who, anxious to oppose suicide upon biblical grounds, found the case before us a stumbling-block which it was not easy to remove, and who, therefore, upon the principle that „Faith can move mountains“ — which saying, of course, remains true, though not in this direction —, have endeavored to

¹⁾ *Christliche Moral*, pp. 183, 184. ²⁾ *Charakteristik der Bibel*, Th. III p. 509.

overcome or overleap the said stumbling-block by any and every means at their bidding: ingenuity, hypothesis, credulity, subterfuge, equivocation (whilst, on the contrary, such other christian moralists as were anxious to defend suicide upon biblical grounds, e. g. Ro-beck, Donne, Holbach, eagerly seized on the case at issue, and very naturally drew from it inferences altogether favorable to their own opinions). The matter is, perhaps, scarcely deserving of controversy; but yet, since it has been converted into an apple of strife, our historical task renders imperative that we should note down and benote such theological vagaries of this sort as have appeared to us most note-worthy.

1. „Nec Samson aliter excusatur, quod seipsum cum hostibus ruina domus oppressit, nisi quia spiritus latenter hoc jusserat, qui per illum miracula faciebat.“ Thus Augustinus the churchfather.¹⁾ „Quod utique factum si defenditur non fuisse peccatum, privatum habuisse consilium indubitanter credendus est, etsi de scriptura hoc non habemus.“ Thus, somewhat less confidently, St. Bernhard of Clairvaux.²⁾ And similarly Thomas Aquinas the Scholastic (in the work we shall discuss in Sect. V), and Busenbaum,³⁾ the Jesuit, argue that Samson was divinely inspired and instigated to suicide, and vindicate his death solely upon this supposition. Of course, this excuse, on the one hand, presupposes either an instinctive and intuitive knowledge and consciousness of the sinfulness of suicide, or an express divine injunction against suicide, which latter supposition is the one here in point, since the above mentioned writers more or less took the existence of a divine interdiction in the Decalogue for granted. And it then, on the other hand, assumes the possibility of sin being authorized and commanded by God, nay, the actuality of an especial divine authority and command for an individual to deviate from an obligation imposed upon mankind in general, to violate a real moral law promulgated by God himself. And we thus see ourselves brought into from face to face contact with what is, perhaps, the most absurd and the most dangerous flaw in the entire ethical system of not Augustinus alone, but of almost all of the Churchfathers, and of the many later teachers who, being themselves without the spirit of true christian philosophy, have con-

¹⁾ De civit. Dei, lib. I, c. 21, and cf. Opera, vol. VIII, p. 446. ²⁾ Tract. de praecepto et dispensatione, c. 3, Opera, I, p. 508. ³⁾ Medulla Theologiae Moralís, 1768, T. I, lib. III, tract. IV, c. 1, dubium 2.

sidingly taken their spiritual medicine out of the hands of such, in this matter at all events, unskilful physicians.

Unto them the entire Old Testament was sacred, because divinely inspired. If, then, here and there prescriptions contradicted each other, and even in a far greater degree contradicted prescriptions in the New Testament; if now and then examples of saints and just persons were adduced and extolled in the Torah which did not harmonize with, which even clashed with, the pure moral principles contained in and laid down by the Gospel: what was to be done? what could be done? It being all-important that the absolutely divine authority of the O. T. should be preserved by whatsoever means, should not suffer itself to be questioned in any manner or degree, one helped one's self chiefly, and could alone help one's self, in and out of so painful a dilemma by assuming and declaring, as in the case under mention, that God really might permit, or even command, anything, though it should be at variance with the principles of pure ethics, and interdicted by Christ himself, and that they who followed and obeyed such a revealed will of God did not sin, but only fulfilled their duty. Vide e. g. Augustine's Confessions, lib. III, c. 9; and in Chrysostomos the enunciation of the principle that God may not only command what is in itself immoral, but even likewise forbid what is in itself good, so that, consequently, man may be in duty bound to commit the former, and to omit the latter. (That Chrysostomos, and, to a certain extent, Augustinus also, apply such *Deus ex machina* and *salto mortale* ethics to some of the early christian martyr-suicides likewise, we shall see in the next Section.)

Nevertheless, such ethics are and remain both absurd and dangerous. *Absurd*, because they render God an accomplice of crime, lower the Divine Sovereignty into undivine caprice, place the divine will and nature at issue with themselves. And *dangerous*, inasmuch as they bid defiance to those salutary restraints and necessary ordinances which enlightened Reason puts and enforces, and which the clear precepts of the highest phase of divine morality, as set forth in the New Testament, sanction and confirm; inasmuch as they, moreover, might aid and tend to justify and deify whatever madness godless impulses should pretend to, and whatsoever abomination brutish passions should aspire to. It is surely not too bold an assertion to make, that the spirit of God cannot inspire aught bad, and that, therefore, if suicide and murder be something bad, it cannot

instigate to them, to whatsoever especial degree of divine favor and initiation the committers thereof may think fit to lay claim. And, at all events, ere we believe in divine dispensations in exceptional cases, we may justly demand *documental* proof with such distinctness and emphasis as admit of no possibility of doubt; and all the evidence here before us is in this point of view not a whit more valid than that which — leaving more general phenomena aside — e. g. at Venice Matthieu Lovat gave, when he supposed himself divinely summoned to crucify himself,¹⁾ or than the Swiss girl Margaretha Peter at Wildenspunch offered, when she imagined herself divinely incited to commit murder and suicide.²⁾ Away, then, with such *conjectural* apologies for mere *wanton* infringements of a universal law in all deep and lofty Ethics. — Additionally, however, Samson's death-deed was immediately preceded (v. 26) by a *falsehood* „suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them“, and was confessedly accompanied (v. 28) by *vindictiveness* „that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes“: were *they* then, also, approved and sanctioned by God? That the author of the book of Judges found nothing in them to object to, we may readily take for granted from those few specimens of his moral code which have already presented themselves to our transient notice; nor would it be difficult to show that Jehovahism, Talmudism, Rabbiniism would acquit them of moral guilt; but it does seem to me both humiliating and strange that many of the Churchfathers and later Christian Divines, with such passages as e. g. Matth. V, 37—43, Luke XXIII, 34, John VIII, 44, Acts V, 4, Romans XII, 19—21, 2 Cor. IV, 12 before them, did not by any means object to making out a case of defence for so-called *pious fraud* and to discovering cause for excusing even the most savagely vindictive among the so-called *maledictory psalms*, though I can perfectly well conceive such an estimate and such a procedure to be one of the natural and necessary baneful influences of ascribing a supernaturally great and even decisive worth and weight to the actions and ensamples of O. T. sainthood, to the sentiments and principles of O. T. historiographers and minstrels.

¹⁾ Vide Schlegel's version of Ruggieri's monograph on this deed, anno 1802, abstracted by Oslander p. 194 ff. ²⁾ Vide J. und Th. Scherr's *gemüthsreiche Geschichte der religiösen und philosophischen Ideen*, B. III, where all the horrid and disgusting details of this case, anno 1823, are given.

2. Hurrying past sundry far less important casual assertions, e. g. that of Clericus (in his Commentary) that Samson might hope that God would miraculously preserve him (is this not shooting one's arrow palpably *beyond* the mark, since Samson himself emphatically exclaims „let me die with the Philistines?“), or, that of van der Muelem (in his annotations on Grotius) that Samson did not directly seek his own death, inasmuch as satiety of life cannot be supposed to have influenced one who had experienced divine miracles too great to admit of his despairing of future prosperity, had he remained alive (may not even the least skeptical be allowed to deem the probability of a blinded Jewish captive's future prosperity among the Philistines extremely problematical?) — we proceed to a somewhat startling mode of justificatory argumentation which e. g. the amiable, gifted and accomplished modern convert to catholicism, Count Fred. von Stolberg¹⁾ has adopted, viz. that, since Samson has had a place assigned to him in the epistle to the Hebrews (ch. XI, 32—34) among the worthy and striking examples of *Faith*, even we Christians are bound to acknowledge this circumstance as a proof positive of the N. T. approbation of his death. It shall not here concern us, whether Paul or somebody else wrote the said epistle, or whether it ought to be considered apostolic at all — on which matter doubts existed already in the early Christian church (vide Eusebius, H. E. III, c. 3, and VI, 14, 20, 25) which have not been fully solved and settled up to the present day —, nor will we bother ourselves about all the varied definitions which theologians and philosophers of different schools have given of the N. T. word πίστις, since our author explains his own meaning himself in the very first verse of the said chapter, though his definition itself should stand somewhat in need of being again defined.²⁾ For my own part, I feel certain of two things. The first is this: the only sense in which „faith“ can be ascribed to *very many* of the persons brought forward in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews as illustrations and demonstrations of the power of faith is that of self-reliance, determination of purpose, fidelity to one's own self, arising

¹⁾ Geschichte der Religion Jesu Christi, B. II, p. 300. ²⁾ On Plato's conception of πίστις in relation to νόμος, διάνοια, εἰσασία vide e. g. vol. II, p. XX of Davis's Introduction to Plato's Philosophy in Bohn's Plato; Jacobi's and Fries' metaphysical definitions of Glaube are the very opposite; and on the various possible acceptations of the description of faith in our passage vide Bleek Der Brief an die Hebräer, B. II, Abth. 2, pp. 721—727.

from *belief* in, i. e. trust to, the election of Israel and the support of Israel's God. *Such* faith, as a general *principle* of action or a *specific* feature of character, made them courageous, daring, hopeful, heroic. The second is this: the ascription of faith *in this sense* to them is, though historically quite warranted, yet something altogether different from the approval and laudation of their *every action*, their every view, their every impulse. Or, if I be wrong in this simple assumption, then I will not hesitate to declare my conviction that the writer of the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews was grievously at fault in his moral philosophy; for does he not also instance Rahab? And we not only believe that he did not mean to set his seal of approbation upon her mode of life, but we sincerely trust that he did not intend to hold up her specified act as ethically right („by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, *when she had received the spies with peace*“, v. 31); for, most assuredly, her *betrayal* of her native city and country by means of a sheer falsehood to her king and with a thoroughly interested bargain for herself was and remains a selfish and base act (vide Joshua II, 1—22, and VI, 24, 25). Consequently, the casual mention of Samson, and apparently more especially in reference to his encounter with the Lion (ch. XIV, 6), has really nothing more to do with a justification of his death than it has to do with a justification of his dissipation.

3. We now, in conclusion, return for a moment to the Jewish justificatory argument as mentioned by Grotius from which we started. Flatly denying its validity, we make bold to affirm what follows. Only the wicked, the impious can, as it were, lower God by living on under any circumstances, and no circumstances can constrain a rational and free agent to be wicked and impious against his own will. The very supposition of such a thing implies an impossible absurdity, and itself degrades and nullifies virtue, man, the Godhead. For instance, living in the captivity and the servitude of idolaters would make a Jew just as little cease to be a worshipper of Jehovah and a member of the Hebrew theocracy as it would make a Christian cease to be a worshipper of Jesus and a member of the Christian church. He need neither swear fealty nor do homage to idolatry, and, if he avoid and decline doing so, why, then, should he slay himself from the foolish conceit that the prolongation of his life would be a dishonor to that Divinity he continues inwardly to

acknowledge and outwardly to adore? How can any short-sighted mortal be so certain that the Deity about whose honor he is so extremely solicitous, does not know ways, and will not employ means, to rescue him, sooner or later, out of his ambiguous situation, and even to convert him into an instrument whereby the power, mercy, name of the Most High shall be vindicated and glorified? What man may dare to affirm that mockery and ignominy can ever accrue unto God by his dependent and believing creature's bearing humbly and patiently unmerited or merited suffering, and enduring scoff and scorn, until Nature, obedient to her divine author's laws, call him hence with her redeeming voice? — No, whoso will justify Samson's „suicide and murder united“ must do so simply and solely on the principle that they were both useful to his people and gratifying to himself, that they avenged him and his country, as far as lay in his individual power and opportunity. Let us, then, not indulge in theologico-spasmodic hyper-efforts, but speak out like men „sans peur“. One only „destroys one's teeth by gnawing at a file.“

When making the above rather lengthy specific remarks, I silently assumed the story of Samson to be genuine history, to which matter, however, we shall recur in §. 52; but, ere we finally dismiss this singular Israelitish personage, two passing general observations may not be beside our purpose. Firstly. As the well-known case of Jephthah's daughter, recounted also in the book of Judges, bears considerable affinity to the Greek legend of Agamemnon's daughter, so the story of Samson powerfully reminds us of that of Herakles. Indeed, the parallel, if pursued, is striking. Both Samson and Herakles were renowned for their physical strength mainly, if not solely, inasmuch as the claims of either of them upon intellectual or moral superiority must appear, to say the very least, exceedingly doubtful. Both of them lived in an age which may or must be considered as comparatively mythical, and it seems next to impossible, or rather utterly so, to separate in their respective stories the genuinely historical from the fabulously ornamental ingredients. Both of them have become, each unto his own nation, and each of them in that sense of the term which their respective nations created and advocated, heroes, or — saints, if you like this word better. Both of them were, despite their extolled manfulness, not only addicted to effeminate indulgences, but also fell victims to the identical fatal delusion of the passions. And, finally, both of them — ended suicidally.

Therefore, the epithet of the Hebrew Herakles, incidentally given to Samson by the one or the other writer, is singularly felicitous and graphic. Secondly. And, as the Greek heros became a favorite theme for the Tragic Muse in his native land, so — for the Hebrews had no dramatic literature — our own Milton selected in his „Samson Agonistes“ our Hebrew heros for the subject of one of his noblest dramatic performances. I need not at this moment stop to enquire what the critical in such matters have said on this drama, sacred through its spirit, antique in its form; but I myself have often wondered how Milton, though so deeply imbued with classical taste and culture, and because by nature and temper so devout and earnest, could evoke and shape such a thoughtful, pathetic, such a solemn and an elegant tragedy out of such coarse and ungainly materials. Rarely has, methinks, so good a work been composed on so had a theme; for the biblical Samson is, as I take it, a fitter hero for a Comedy or a Mock-Heroic Epic than for the kind of Poem Milton's genius has indited!

II. Saul (1 Sam. XXXI, 3—6, 2 Sam. I, 10, and 1 Chron. X, 4, 5).

Having terminated what we had to communicate about Samson by a brief allusion to dramatic literature, we will commence our communications about Saul with a few words about the singularly dramatic nature of the leading elements, features, incidents in his character and career: his almost patriarchally idyllic entrance into history, his strikingly tragic departure out of life, and between these two extremes the psychological problems and moral contradictions which adhere to his deep melancholy, that „evil spirit“ which only the potent charm of music could lay, and to his tempting of the future world, that mysterious summons of the „witch of Endor“ — have often led me to imagine that a sort of Macbeth-tragedy might be wrought out of suchlike materials, in which David would find a place not altogether dissimilar in spirit to that of Banquo; but, of course, a Shakspeare-genius would have to compose it; for e. g. Alfieri's „Saolo“ falls very short of being anything like so interesting or impressive, though the Italian poet, judging from the dedicatory epistle he has prefixed to it, esteemed it his own master-piece. This, however, by the way.

There are certain palpable discrepancies in the twofold Hebrew narrative of the death of this first king over Israel which place the

reader in a sort of dilemma which the historian himself seems utterly unconscious of, since he has not taken even the slightest pains to remove our doubts touching the real state of the case. According to one passage, namely, Saul fell upon his own sword, after having in vain implored his shield-bearer, who preferred forthwith slaying himself, to kill him; whereas, according to another passage, a young Amalekite, after the battle, finished off at Saul's own request the sorely wounded monarch by a sort of coup de grace. Of course, we cannot at this time of day pretend to know which way the matter actually occurred. Whenever a royal personage falls on a field of battle or by some other untoward event, divergent accounts are apt to be given by, and mysterious legends shape themselves among, the credulous and awe-struck multitude who are often loth to believe that a veritable king should have met with a death as simple as that of any other ordinary mortal. (Cf. e. g. what history records of Gustavus Adolphus, James IV of Scotland, Julian the Apostate, Sebastian of Portugal, Charles XII.) And, though David's subsequent behaviour towards the said Amalekite (2 Sam. I, 13—16) cannot, of course, prove aught in the matter, it is in an ethico-legal point of view important enough to deserve a few passing remarks. It naturally lay and lies in the interest of ancient and modern orthodox theology to defend and extol in the man „after God's own heart“ (1 Sam. XIII, 14) whatsoever admitted at all of either praise or excuse, and I have not remained in ignorance of what e. g. Augustus and J. D. Michaelis have said in vindication of the said behaviour. But, loving verity in its undity, I cannot but prefer to their apologetic attempts the far more human and humane, as it seems to me, manner in which e. g. F. W. Newman¹⁾ disposes of this subject. „A high-handed manifesto of loyalty, with which it is hard for Christian or modern feelings to sympathize, but which was probably much admired by his countrymen, when executed upon the cheap body of an Amalekite. The action was politic, as proclaiming the sanctity of kings; and by the death of Jonathan, David saw the way to kingly station open to him. Yet we may believe that impulse had a larger share in the act than calculation. Although David had not attained the Christian virtue of loving enemies, he burned with indignation that an Israelitish king should be killed by a dog of an

¹⁾ History of the Hebrew Monarchy, p. 37.

Amalekite; and any personal resentment he may have felt against Saul vanished at once when his death was ascertained."

But to come to our express point. Our Hebrew historian himself, though, because palpably favorable to Saul's sacerdotal antagonist Samuel, not by any means partial to Saul, does not censure his death, nor does he make David condemn it, nor does he let the Israelites take offence at it; and, as we have learnt from Calmet and Grotius, the Rabbis approve and commend it. Such approval and commendation cannot, however, be reasonably charged upon the spirit and tenor of the account given in, and the impression made by the writers of, the two books of Samuel and the first book of the Chronicles. We are, rather, assured that at an early period already Saul had declined from his obedience to Jehovah, and that, therefore, royalty was not to remain hereditary in his family; that he degenerated the longer the more into jealousy, persecution, cruelty, melancholy and superstition; that, in a word, he had forsaken and rejected Jehovah, and, therefore, was in his turn, according to the *only legitimate* nexus between cause and effect in the order of a Providence both merciful and just, i. e. truly divine, forsaken and rejected by Jehovah; and, consequently, his self-inflicted death is evidently not meant to be portrayed as an action of piety or even courage. We, then, too say it was not an action of *courage*, though Niemeyer (Eh. IV, p. 118 of the already quoted work) is of a very different opinion. „Wir haben mehrere Beispiele von solchem, freilich zum Theil auf Nationalvorurtheile gegründeten, Heroismus gehabt. Aus dem Gesichtspunkte eines Israeliten angesehen und in jener roheren Zeit, kann man es nur sehr uneigentlich strafbaren Selbstmord nennen. Die, welche so verschwenderisch mit dem Lobe bei den Thaten berühmter Helden sind, sollten sogar, wenn sie billig sein wollten, diese That unter die Beispiele des wahren Heldenmuths setzen.“ But, Saul was not really a *hero* in any sense of this term. Vide e. g. the description of his faint-heartedness, when he saw the host of the Philistines, and still more, when he heard from the sorceress that he would perish in the battle against them (1 Sam. XXVIII, 5 and 20). Nor did he display veritable *courage* even in the last battle-scene of his life. It was, when wounded on his *flight*, and not until then, i. e. not until he found himself unable to get off successfully, that he bent his thoughts upon self-destruction. His own last words „lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me“ clearly prove that, on the

one hand, his death had no reference whatsoever to the glory of Jehovah, was, on the contrary, simply a means of *desperation* to which he had recourse for the purpose of not becoming an object of opprobrium, derision and ill-treatment to his Philistine enemies, and that, on the other hand, he had not recourse to such means except in the very last moment, i. e. when everything else was lost, consequently, simply from *fear*, or, of you like, *pride*, i. e. a selfish and sensual motive; — not even for an *idea*, like even Brutus and Cassius, not even from a deliberate *conviction*, like even a Cato. — We, further, say: it was still less an action of *piety*, despite the Rabbinical stuff Grotius (as quoted in §. 49) treats us to the knowledge of: „et Saulis, qui gladio incubuit, ne a Dei suisque hostibus illuderetur, nam hunc *resipuisse* volunt, postquam Samuelis umbra mortem ipsi praedixerat, quam gnarus sibi imminere si pugnaret, praelium pro patria et Dei lege non detrectavit, aeternam inde laudem meritus Davidis etiam praeconio: a quo et ii, qui Saulem cum honore sepelierant, recte facti testimonium retulerunt.“ All sorts of Rabbinical statements about Saul's presumptive „resipiscentia“ and a serious discussion, whether he was ultimately after his death received among the Saved and Blessed, ended by a decision in the affirmative, those readers who are interested in such curious and silly quandaries and queries will find e. g. in Lyra's annotations on the pertinent passages in the Kings and Chronicles; for, as I said already in §. 47, Lyra was of Jewish origin and thence by a sort of inherited taste and opportunity more than ordinarily conversant with and, perhaps, interested in Talmudical lore and Rabbinical trash. I have carefully read them, but would not waste my time on transcribing them, since they one and all appeared to me not unkindred to yon Indian philosophy's world-supporting tortoise which *itself rests upon nothing*. Common sense, on the contrary, certifies to us the following two facts: firstly, Saul would not have summoned the spectre, if he had still retained any real reverence for Mosaism, any decided faith in Jehovahism, since suchlike necromancy (שאל אורח, דרש אל המחים) was branded in the Thora as a sign of apostasy from Israeldom, was forbidden on pain of death (Levit. XX, 6; Deut. XVIII, 10—14; Exod. XXII, 18); and, secondly, if Saul did not believe the said spectre, he must have gone into the battle to try, whether it spoke truth, and, if — this is the more likely thing — he did believe it, he must have gone into the battle for the very

purpose of perishing; at all events, in either case there is as little reason for assuming his penitence as there is for assuming his anxious concern about his country or his pious regard for the law, honor, dignity of God.

III. Achitophel (2 Sam. XVII, 23).

Whether this ill-famed notability hanged himself from vexation, i. e. insulted ambition, because Absalon had preferred the counsels of others to his, or, from fear, because he perceived that David would prove victorious and then cause him to be as traitor executed, or, from a kind of sense of honor, is a question of utter indifference to us for our present purpose, and cannot, indeed, be answered with aught more satisfactory than a mere shrewd guess. At any rate, his death would appear to us to be only of a piece with the latter portion of his conduct, nay, with his veritable deepest nature, upon which stand inscribed in pretty legible letters the epithets able and resolute, but crafty and unprincipled. Nevertheless, the Jewish historian has not affixed either blame or praise to this same *perfectly deliberate* case of suicide; having simply chronicled it, he commits it to the reader's own reflexions. But, as far as I am aware, neither Rabbinical nor Christian writer has ever essayed to encircle his death-deed with any measure of halo: wherefore, we cannot turn the narrative before us to any account in our *historico-ethical* point of view, though Bishop Fleetwood's already quoted three sermons on self-murder have it for their text; but, in our *historico-legislative* point of view, it will prove to us of considerable importance, as we shall see in Chapt. IV of this Sect. Yet, we must not drop the matter even here entirely; for — *mirabile dictu* — there exists among some a *linguistic* doubt, whether Achitophel really himself wrought his own death at all! What, however, has been advanced already in §. 49 might almost suffice to put down this doubt; and I certainly would not re-enter upon this enquiry, if what we shall have further to advance were not calculated and even needful to shed more or less desirable light upon a still more disputed and a far more significant case which will demand our attention in the next Section, viz. the exact mode of the death of Judas Iscariot.

In §. 49 we found that the *Hebrew* term here employed is in and by itself, i. e. philologically and irrespectively of the context, equivocal, non-decisive, though we did not see the slightest reason for hesitating to believe it amply explicit in the historical narrative

now under discussion. The Greek term employed by Aquila in Job VII, 15 is ἀρχόνη, and the LXX translate in our passage: καὶ ἀπήγατο; the *Vulgate* rendering of yonder word is „suspendium“ and of the passage before us „suspendio interit.“ It is, however, the Greek form — the aor. 1 med. of ἀπάχω, in which compound the ἀπό would not seem materially to modify the simple ἄχω — which here principally concerns us, because it is this identical form which recurs in Matth. XXVII, 5, and which has considerably contributed to render the narrative there given debateable.

We will speak of Achitophel's case first. Bishop Patrick (*vide* in his biblical commentary the notes on the second book of Samuel) instructs us that, though he himself understood the ἀπήγατο in 2 Sam. XVII, 23 as conveying literally self-suspension, yet some of the Jews will have it that Achitophel died of grief, or, was choked by a quinsy, that passion, anger, anguish, or vexation cast him into a distemper so violent that he was strangled by it, &c. But, pray, *what* particular Jews? This question he has not answered; and, if we must answer it for him, we should do so by referring to the oldest Jewish writer, Josephus, who (*Ant. Jud. lib. VII, c. 9, §. 8*) details how Achitophel called his family together and told them beforehand that and why it would be better for him *to take his own life away*; and to the most recent Jewish writer, Herzheimer, who (*vide §. 49*), very far from countenancing such an interpretation, tradition or hypothesis, entirely *ignores* their very existence. Furthermore, coming to the case of Judas as well, Grotius¹⁾ says among other things what follows. „Nam compressionem spiritus e moerore summo hac voce indicari, vel unus Tobiae liber nos doceat, ubi de Sara dicitur c. III, 12 (should be 10): ἀλυπήθη σφόδρα, ἵστα ἀπάχασθαι. Et de Achitophile, in quem, quae dicta sunt a Davide, in Judam apprime congruunt, et de quo similiter legimus ἀπήγατο, ubi in Hebraeo est קנן, quod verbum et Syrus, et Arabs hic usurpant, sentiunt Hebraeorum non ineruditi non laqueo, sed moestitia eum perisse.“ However, the parallel passage from the apocryphal Jewish didactico-moral book of Tobit, whether this story be a pure fiction, or more or less historically based, does not appear to me to prove what Grotius intended it to do. A certain Sara, the daughter of Reguel, who was an exile in Ecbatana, and a near relative of To-

¹⁾ Annotationes in N. T. ad Matth. XXVII, 5.

bit's, had the misfortune of witnessing seven of her lovers successively killed by Asmodi on the evening of their very bridal day. When, now, she was about to chastize one of her father's maids, the latter, in their vexation, reproached her with having been the undoubted murderess of the aforesaid men. Sorely afflicted by this reproach, she was at first on the very verge (here the above words come in, Greek, there being no extant Hebrew original, supposing Greek not to have been the original text) of *hanging herself*, as Ilgen¹⁾ understands our words in his but too drily elaborate monograph on our book (daß sie sich hätte erhängen mögen), and as also de Wette translates (daß sie sich erhängen wollte), though she subsequently restrained herself, and addressed herself in prayer to God for the rescue of her innocence. What, indeed, should induce, much less compel, us to understand the verb at issue in this passage rather passively and figuratively than reflexively and literally, though it is quite possible and even probable that our word-form may in some passage or other of classical Graecism have such passive and figurative import.²⁾ All dictionary-authorities on the idiom of the N. T. and the LXX (vide the foot-note) are agreed in assigning to ἀνάγω, which occurs only this once in the N. T., as indubitable the signification of fauces constringere, and to ἀνάγχου that of laqueo me suspendo, vitam finio suspendio, and refer us for examples to Polybius, Aelian, Xenophon, Herodotos, Theokritos, &c., and from my own reading I will add Lucian's εἴ τις ἀνήγατο where (vide the passage as quoted in §. 17) our word-form evidently stands for any kind of suicide in opposition to either being put to death or to dying a natural death (cf. also §. 35 on the Latin suspendiosus, &c.). Suidas, too, as quoted by Schleusner and Bretschneider explains ἀνήγατο by βρόχον ἤψεν. What, then, could urge us to endeavor to make out that either Achitophel or Judas perished in some *less active* and *less voluntary* manner than by actual self-suspension?

By the by, besides the mere identity of the words used of Achitophel and Judas, many theologians have inclined to pursue the

¹⁾ Die Geschichte Zobi's nach drei verschiedenen Originalen, dem Griechischen, dem Lateinischen des Hieronymus und einem Syrischen übersezt, u. s. w., p. 46.

²⁾ Vide Schleusner's dictionary on the N. T. (edit. 4) s. v. He, however, is the only one of the three most celebrated lexicographers of the N. T. who admits the possibility of this meaning in general, though he does not admit its probability in reference to Judas or Achitophel. Wahl (edit. 2) and Bretschneider (edit. 2) make no mention at all of any such meaning.

parallel between their modes of death all the more closely, because they persuaded themselves that there was a sort of prophetic spiritual relationship between them, that, in other words, the sinner of the O. T. was a kind of *type* of the still greater sinner of the N. T. At least, Calmet informs us that Theodoret affirmed something to this effect! For goodness' sake, if either schemers foiled or traitors repentant are not altogether unlikely to make away with themselves, and, if self-suspension was not an unusual mode of self-dispatchment among the Jews either in the time of David or that of Jesus, — what is there so startling and peculiar in the coincidence under mention, and, therefore, what need can there be of *typology*? Must, then, everything that pertains to the N. T. history of the Saviour be foreshadowed and prefigured in O. T. events, persons, articles of Temple furniture and Tabernacle garniture? If I recollect rightly, I have read in former days some dozens of volumes an suchlike typifications, allegorizations, spiritualizations, and was then much edified by some of them, from I know not what up to Krummacker's sermons on the Canticle of Canticles, not omitting the Hutchinsonian reveries. The imagination of theologians must have occupation as well as that of poets, and why should one object to suchlike mental gambols of infinite variety, if they afford pleasure to the fancy and material for sermons, *as long as they are harmless and edifying*. Everybody, however, may thereby find everything in every given passage, and one can only smile when e. g. Eusebius (H. E., I, c. 3) at once declares *all* the priests, kings, and prophets of the O. T. types of the Messiah, or Zozomen (H. E., I, c. 1) lays considerable stress upon Isaac „as the type of the sacrifice on the cross, because he was led bound to the altar by his father.“ „And what seem'd corporal, melted as breath into the wind“, may with propriety be said also of such phantom-creations of a heated theologic brain, as soon as they become breathed upon by the strong breath of sober thought. But, there is a line drawn by moral taste and religious feeling which even suchlike fantastic ingenuities ought never to be allowed to transgress, and, for my own part, I must be pardoned for shrinking with some degree of horror, when Pope Gregory the Great¹⁾ drew a parallel between the *death of Samson* and *that of Jesus*, and proclaimed the former *typical* („quod bene Samson dudum in

¹⁾ In expositionem beati Job Moralis, lib. XXIX, c. 14, §. 26.

semstipso figuraliter expressit, qui" &c. — the exact tertium comparationis the reader may read for himself) of the latter! — —

This Chapter has become more diffuse, if not more intricate, than I might, perhaps, have desired; but the absolutely vital importance of the Jewish Canon in the eyes of many, and its historic relative bearing upon the Apocrypha and upon Christianity in our own sight, seemed to me to warrant considerable circumstantiality and scrupulosity; but I will now briefly and candidly sum up the results at which we have individually arrived, since I shall have to refer to these results on two separate occasions in the sequel.

1. We saw no reason for assenting to the opinion of those Jewish or Christian writers who find an interdiction of suicide either in the Noachide or the Mosaic legislation, but, on the contrary, every reason for dissenting from that opinion. Even if, however, suicide had been forbidden by either set of laws, *we* should not have viewed such commandment as absolutely obligatory upon Christians, inasmuch as we should have seen therein only what the respective ancient Hebrew legislators themselves reflected of their own moral insight and culture upon Jehovah, to which same reflex we should have ascribed a divine character only in as far as it harmonizes with the purer and deeper teaching of Christianity, or, if you like, with what is ethically valid to enlightened Reason, with what is stamped as religious on the discerning Conscience of every educated human being. For, on the one hand, *some* of those laws, e. g. the law concerning the Goei in Gen. IX and the law about the observance of the Sabbath in the Decalogue, were manifestly intended even by their human originators themselves (man, as we believe, not God, originated the said legislative codes) to be obligatory only upon the people to whom they were given, not upon mankind in general, and in part to be so only as long as temporal and local influences and circumstances should remain essentially as they *then* were. And, on the other hand, since Moses assures his readers that Jehovah had immediately before the giving of the Decalogue and immediately afterwards, i. e. in connexion with the deliverance out of Egypt and the taking possession of Canaan, commanded him sundry things which we deem to be morally and religiously unquestionably wrong, viz. e. g. simulation or falsehood (Exod. III, 18, cf. also 1 Sam. XVI, 1—3), dishonesty or theft (Exod. III, 22; XI, 2;

XII, 35, 36), barbarity or murder (Numb. XXI, 2, 3; XXXI, 15—18; Deut. VII, 2; XX, 17), we cannot reasonably persuade ourselves that the codes contained in either Genesis or Exodus are, as matter of course, divine in their origin, unless we should be at the same time able to discern — which thing seems to me utterly impossible — a divine character in all their various items. If, nevertheless, Moses believed them to be divine conceptions, he was not by any means exactly a deceiver; for, everything that takes root and assumes shape in the soul of a truly great man, and vitally aids his people towards veritable progress, is subjectively a divine conception, though it need not be objectively one. Or, if he, merely accommodating himself to the insight and faith of an untutored and a credulous multitude, declared them to be divine conceptions, we might almost venture to affirm that suchlike accommodation — subsequently practised by others (vide §. 34) — belongs to those semi-justifiable measures of policy and prudence unto which Providence affords temporarily space and scope in this imperfect world-order of ours, deigning even to employ them for salutary issues. — Inasmuch, however, as, according to the analysis we have given, there is no evidence to show that either in the Genesis or in Exodus suicide formed an object of the legislator's contemplations, and still less to prove that it was intended to be hinted at as a thing forbidden, I shall leave the reader to select, by way of accounting to himself for the said oversight or premeditated silence, any one of the *fourfold* conjectures I already, with special reference to the *לֹא-יִרְצֶחַ*, placed at his bidding on p. 65 of §. 14.

2. It is true (vide pp. 118, 119 of §. 10 and pp. 144, 145 of §. 72), the book called Job was at a comparatively early period of the Christian church already employed and quoted for anti-suicidal purposes. This circumstance arose, however, as we have in the proper places demonstrated, mainly through the influence of the linguistic blunders or the capricious mistranslations of the LXX, only a very few of the least significant of which we took occasion to indicate in §. 49 itself. But, when we take into due consideration the unquestionable fact that, firstly, in this noble work sundry deeper and purer religious notions may be discerned than in Moses and even in the Prophets, e. g. an all but expressly pointed refutation of the theory about individual suffering as having individual sin and guilt for its necessary cause, a theory apparently quite characteristic of the Thora

and many other O. T. Scriptures; and that, secondly, the very nature of the peculiar disease, with which Job is represented as being afflicted, might not only visit him in his sleep and dreams with a sensation of being strangled or of strangling himself, but even predispose him in a waking state really to a temptation to do some rash violence with his hands — as he, doubtless, utters rebellious impatience with his lips: — sundry Christian interpreters may well be pardoned for bringing the one or the other of the several above discussed passages into a direct relation with suicide, since we do not see why the bare mention of suicide should exactly militate irreconcilably against the religious character of Job. But, on the one hand, the impetuous and figurative diction of this so thoroughly Eastern poetry, from which certain hyperbolic expressions (cf. e. g. the last hemistich of ch. XXI, 18) are inseparable, can scarcely be regarded as embodying deliberative and argumentative *ethical* tenets; and, on the other hand, not a single set of the parallel lines we have discussed, and more especially not those in Ch. VII on which the main stress has been laid, can fairly be said to contain, if interpreted literally, naturally, idiomatically, a *positive* reference to, let alone a *decided* condemnation of, suicide, though, I am willing to admit, *anti-suicidal* principles might be justly inferred, albeit not from the *words*, yet from the *spirit*, of this or that passage we have in §. 49 and elsewhere dwelt on.

3. The Israelitic historiographers can scarcely be said to occupy an independent, individualizing, psychological ethical standing-point. They apply to saints and sinners almost exclusively a traditionary *Jehovahic*, not a philosophically *human*, standard, in this respect resembling not a little some of the mediaeval christian chroniclers. Therefore, they had no opinion of their own to offer on what had been neither interdicted nor commanded by Jehovah, or, were indifferent thereto, and contented themselves with neutrality. Thus, as far as we can gather from their brief records, suicide did not make a saint less saintly, or a sinner more sinful. Apparently, they were themselves uncertain and in the dark about the question in the abstract. To endeavor to extract *censure* of the act as act from any one of the historians of canonical Hebrewdom — would be simply ridiculous.

CHAPTER II. THE APOCRYPHA.

§. 51. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

A very considerable change, *linguistic, doctrinal, and political*, had come over the Hebrew race during the last few centuries before the Christian era, and this treble change may, I believe, in some measure at least, account for the existence of the so-called Apocrypha (if from ἀποκρύπτειν, to conceal: I presume to = exclude from national sanction, from general use), a certain number of writings composed by Jews, but which the Jews, nevertheless, have uncontestably never incorporated with their twenty four books of the Thorah, the Nebiim, and Chetubim, i. e. have never used or regarded as doctrinal or religious documents in a pre-eminent sense.¹⁾ a. The linguistic change. If the Jews through their lengthened sojourn as Exiles in another Eastern land, Chaldea, had in a great measure adopted for the vehicle of their utterance yon other Semitic dialect, Aramaic, had lost the command over their native idiom as a developed living tongue, and had, after their return into the country of their forefathers on the banks of the Jordan, as it were, to re-learn it, without being, however, able to restore it to its former purity and independence, we at once perceive that a genuine original national literature was no longer possible unto them, even as far as mere *diction* is concerned. This in one direction; and a similar, and in some respects still greater, philological influence was exercised over the Hebrews at a somewhat later period by Greek, more especially after Alexander's general, Ptolemy Lagi, lieutenant in Egypt, had anno 301 taken possession of Judea and transplanted numbers of Jews into Egypt, where he and his successors favored (more espe-

¹⁾ Vide the well-known passage in Josephus: contra Apionem, sect. 8.

cially at Alexandria, yon sheltering port and profitable market for the yieldings of a fourfold civilization, Greek, Roman, pagan Eastern and Hebrew), their originally compulsory settlement, and countenanced, and supported their cultivation of Greek letters. b. The doctrinal change. But, with different words came also different thoughts, with new forms of speech also, to a considerable extent, new standards of religion and philosophy, dogmatics and ethics. If in Babylon, Assyria, Media the Jews had superadded to their own primal Jehovahism many a mystic and speculative novelty, in Alexandria, where, as we saw in §§. 31, 32, Platonism and Pythagorism had already commenced to mingle themselves in strange fashion with various elements of Orientalism, they could scarcely fail to become the longer the more, from the commencement of the 2nd cent. a. C. downwards, initiated into, and infected by, Greek theorems and tenets along with Greek customs and culture in general. Thus, then, likewise the *spiriti* and *doctrines* of later Jewish literature became gradually modified considerably, i. e. less one-sided, defined, less absolutely and characteristically national. e. The political change. The Jews had begun to cease to be an independent nation, or, to find themselves concentrated and isolated within the limits of their own territory, and even, perhaps, to a certain extent at least, to feel themselves select and elect in their own ancestral faith and habitudes. Therefore, the belief in continuous, special divine revelations and inspirations could no longer retain its former strong hold upon them; therefore, their prophet-schools could no longer keep their stand as of old; therefore, men distinguished in a pre-eminent degree by genius, eloquence, knowledge, patriotism, zeal, courage, in the earlier manner and for the earlier purposes, could no longer arise and reckon upon being considered and designated by the entire nation as prophets, i. e. as teachers, poets, orators in the highest and noblest sense, as men believed to stand in especial nearness unto God, and accepted as entitled to especial authority over the people. Add to this that, as far as we learn, yon tendency to apostasy from Jehovah to Idolatry, which had so strongly marked the Israelites at earlier periods, now the longer the more seemed to have tired itself out: and then we can pretty easily conceive how, as we are assured, with Malachi, i. e. about four centuries before the birth of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy was declared to have departed out of Israel, divine inspiration was said to have ceased, and — to come to our point —

sacred Jewish literature was deemed to have terminated, the Hebrew Canon was proclaimed to be closed.

And what, then, came to teach, guide, warn, comfort, narrate during the four important, troublous, eventful centuries which immediately preceded the Advent of Christ among Israel's chosen people? Sects: the mechanical Pharisees, the skeptical Sadducees, the mystical Essenes; Rabbinism with its work of mere praelection, dry, dependent, scholastic, which ever soon steps in, when the creative power of genius, the genuine eloquence of conviction and the heart, and the glow of patriotic enthusiasm have passed away; and, finally, as written documents that have reached us — a certain number of writings, philosophical, ethical, and historical, conceived in a spirit strongly impregnated with Chaldean or Alexandrian elements, and penned in depraved Hebrew, or in Greek more or less tinctured with Hebraisms, writings which, though written by Jews, partly in Palestine and partly in Egypt, the Jews themselves, as before said, when they made up their Canon, excluded from this Code of their national literature as being no longer genuine effluences of the ruach hakadosch, the Spirit of the Lord, i. e. as we understand this matter, as no longer originally and purely Hebrew in language and doctrine, in thought and form.

Thus, at least, I account to myself from a *purely literary and historical* standing-point for the decided and unanimous rejection of the Apocrypha on the part of the Jews; and, no doubt, they had a perfect right to include in, and to exclude from, their Canon whatever writings they chose, just as, to take a trivial instance by way of illustration, the Lutherans had a right to make their own Catechism, or the French to fix the boundaries of their classical Literature. But, I very much doubt whether it be possible at this time of day to ascertain the exact reasons which induced the Jews to reject so decidedly and unanimously these same Apocrypha. Purely *chronological* reasons must ever have their difficulties since no positive certainty would seem to have been hitherto arrived at touching either the age in which the Canon was formed and closed, or that in which the various Apocrypha were composed. *Linguistic* reasons, too, have their difficulties, since some of the Apocrypha would seem to have been penned originally in Hebrew, and it is not known when they ceased to be current in their original shape. And, finally, as to *dogmatic and ethical* reasons, which here more especially concern

us, it would be very difficult to prove that (just as portions in Daniel and Esra, as not being Hebrew, clash with the linguistic reasons, and the former and, perhaps, also the book of Esther, as of comparatively late date, clash with the chronological ones) e. g. the wisdom of Jesus Sirach and the first book of the Maccabees, would as religious, moral, and historical documents have to shun a comparison with any similar productions in the Canon, and may indeed be even, despite Luther, „der heiligen Schrift gleich gehalten.“ At all events, we Christians are, as I believe, in no wise bound in this matter by the verdict and procedure of the Jews, are, rather, perfectly at liberty to test and estimate the relative value or unvalue of the Apocrypha according to our own judgment, feeling, knowledge, tact, creed, and shall, if we do so without prejudice or passion, without dogmatic bias or polemic purpose, haply, be led to consider that from such so-called Apocrypha as have reached us much instruction and edification may be derived in regard to history, philosophy and morals. In them, too, as — let us not forget this! — in many canonical writings also, there is of wheat not a little beside such tares as e. g. Bel and the Dragon, Judith, and they are verily not, despite Luther, even „nützlich und gut zu lesen.“

These few introductory observations seemed to me necessary, if we would encourage ourselves to judge impartially and aright of the defectiveness and worthlessness of much that has been written on that particular passage in one of the Apocrypha which alone directly bears upon our specific topic.

§. 52. THE DEATH OF RAZIS.

This Elder of Jerusalem, after having made several unsuccessful attempts at self-destruction, is, at last, actually released by a voluntary death. 2 Macc. XIV, 37—86. (To the account given in this passage we shall exclusively direct our attention in the following arguments and comments; I may, however, state that also in the so-called fifth book of the Maccabees¹⁾ the same occurrence is narrated. But, though no praise is in the latter narrative bestowed on the deed as such, and though the *fear of torture* is ascribed to the Jewish

¹⁾ Ibid. ch. XIV, 18, 18. I am acquainted with it only from Cotton's translations of the five books of the Maccabees.

Elder as his sole motive for self-destruction, yet the entire tenor of the narration itself manifestly conveys laudation.)

Arnold¹⁾ took upon himself to pronounce the entire narrative a mere fiction, his reason for doing so being to something like the following effect: it would be impossible for any person, having made so many partially successful successive attacks upon his own life to have possessed, at its very close, still physical strength enough to have made the final attempt in the manner above related, and to have additionally retained likewise sufficient consciousness to die with a prayer upon his lips. — I, too, cannot help imagining that the circumstances as here detailed bear evident marks of adornment and exaggeration, just as we cannot suppose that our author reported accurately what each of the seven martyrs (ch. VII) said in his dying moments; but this is something altogether different from the entire narrative being a downright fabrication. But, our Protestant writer had palpably an eye to controversy against Rome (vide further on in this §), when he pronounced the said verdict; and it is, therefore, but fair that we should meet him on his own ground, for one brief moment take him to task, and show that, though he reasoned correctly as philosopher, he argued badly as theologian. We will, in so doing, limit ourselves to that more or less analogous case of Samson which engaged, in other points of view, our attention in §. 50. Was the exhibition of physical strength recorded of him in a greater degree credible than the manifestation of mental energy detailed of Rasis? The pious and believing Dr. Thomas Browne writes in his *religio Medici* what follows²⁾ „I confess there are, in Scripture, stories that do exceed the fables of poets, and, to a capacious reader, sound like Garagantua or Bevis. Search all the legends of times past, and the fabulous conceits of those present, and 't will be hard to find one that deserves to carry the buckler to Sampson; yet is all this of an easy possibility, if we conceive a divine course, or an influence but from the little finger of the Almighty.“ — Of course, „if we conceive“, but, what may man not conceive, if he have a purpose to serve and a system to defend? „*Certum est*

¹⁾ Dissert. on the books of the Maccabees, p. 121 of edit 2. He refers us to the Oxford Prof. of Divinity Rainoldus' *censura librorum apocryphorum* V. T., adv. Pontificios, imprimis Robertum Bellarminum, T. II, Praelectiones 133, 134. But I have not been able to verify this reference in the edit. of 1611. ²⁾ Works, edited by Wilkin, vol. II, p. 29.

quæ impossibile est: this is an an „odd resolution“ of Tertullian's which Sir Thomas has previously (p. 14) quoted and approved. And, pray, *why* should we „conceive“ the Miraculous to have been at work in the case of Sampson, and yet not in that of Razis also, if both cases be equally improbable or impossible on merely human grounds? Surely, Razis was fully as worthy of divine aid as Samson, nay, we cannot help thinking, a vast deal more so. What, then would be the rationale, or, rather, the irrationale, of the faith and evidence Arnold and his like would bring to bear on the subject? Something to this effect only, if I err not: what is told of Samson stands in a canonical book, whereas what is told of Razis stands in an apocryphal one. Mighty difference! Wonderful distinction! The canonical books do not and cannot, because they are canonical, relate fictions as facts; but the apocryphal ones may do so, because they are apocryphal! O glorious City of Refuge for hermeneutic transgressions to make their escape into! Beautiful argumentum in circulo, which in holy simplicity takes unsuspectingly the quod erat demonstrandum for granted without any demonstratum whatsoever! In very sooth, is not suchlike historical criticism as dishonest as it is puerile? If we would reason *at all*, we must reason *fully*: and, if we must needs criticise *anywhere*, we ought to criticise *everywhere*. There is only one law of evidence, only one standard of trust in all matters of historiography; and, therefore, if we carry the philosopher's lantern into the dark passages of the canonical books, we should discover defects similar to those over which Arnold here exults with so much noise, when he found them in the apocryphal writings. In other words, the narratives touching both Samson's and Razis' deaths are not downright fabrications, not mere religious legends, but yet palpable exaggerations of the romantic reminiscences of the Hebrew people. — Furthermore, if one were to object — vide further on — that only unsound and dangerous Ethics may be eliminated from the circumstances attendant upon the death of Razis, we object that those which we could glean from the circumstances connected with the death of Samson were verily! neither sound nor salutary; and that, moreover, any ethical side-glance, just as little as any dogmatical bias, would justify a conscientious and consistent moralist in departing from the ordinary test to which Reason is called upon to subject all historical testimony.

However, proceeding now to speak of the verdict pronounced

by the writer of the second book of the Maccabees, very little is in reality either gained or lost for the immediate purpose of our present enquiry, whether the *exact mode* of the death of Razis be fact or fiction, since there can be no reason for doubting the bare circumstance of his having killed himself. We may, therefore, quietly admit that the narrative before us is, like many others¹⁾ in this not very valuable historical performance, beset by sundry improbabilities, adorned with certain poetical and patriotic excrescences: the documentary evidence of the *opinion* of the *writer* concerning *suicide*, concerning, at least, *this species* of suicide, i. e. his unmistakable and undeniable *praise* of a suicide, of suicide under certain circumstances and for certain reasons, still, nevertheless, remains. Nor need we care to ascertain, who this writer was, some utterly nameless Jew who, perhaps, towards the end of the 2nd cent. a. C., or in the 1st cent. p. C., merely in Greek epitomized faithfully into one book the five books which an equally unknown Jason of Cyrene had in Greek composed.²⁾

Razis, who must have flourished in the last half of the 2nd cent. a. C., is described to us as a zealous Jew, extolled as an excellent man, represented as himself considering his death well-pleasing in the sight of God, unto Whom he in his last moments prays with confidence for Bliss hereafter, and the adverbs εὐγενῶς, nobly, honorably (v. 42) and ἀνδρείως s. ἀνδρωδῶς, manfully, valiantly (v. 43) are applied to the manner and spirit of his self-inflicted death. LXX: εὐγενῶς θάλων ἀποθάνειν κατεκρήμνησεν ἑαυτὸν ἀνδρείως εἰς τοὺς ὄχλους; Vulgata: eligens nobiliter mori potius praecepit semetipsum viriliter in turbas.

Surely, now, whoever will for one single moment reflect dispassionately upon the above-mentioned predicates in their full legitimate signification (on ἀνδρείως cf. §§. 25, 26; the epithet σοφενῶς may, like the Latin nobilis, generosus, the German edel, the English noble, have regard equally to mind or character, birth or station; but either reference would be here equally significant; de Wette's version *hebenmüthig* does not appear to me felicitous); as well as upon the entire context in which they occur, cannot possibly fail to find them laudatory in the most decided tone, or, hesitate to pronounce

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. III, 24; V, 2; VI, VII; X, 3; XV, 12. ²⁾ Vide II, 19—32, and XV, 38, 39.

them the highest and the only kind of laudatory ones which an approving and admiring historian could have here employed. What, then, shall we say to the evasive qualifications which e. g. Augustinus and Lipsius have proposed and urged? Both of them, namely, would fain persuade us that our historian's eulogy is only a restricted, a relative, not an extreme and absolute one. The former writer gives himself considerable trouble (vide epist. 104, and de civit. Dei as already quoted) to prove that the adverbs, „humiliter“ and „salubriter“, because = „utiliter“ and „fideliter“ would have implied something better and greater than „nobiliter“ and „viriliter“; yet, he gently censures it: „non ergo fuit, iste vir eligendae mortis sapiens, sed ferendae humilitatis impatiens.“ And the latter writer (as quoted in §. 29) modifies and dilutes the historiographer's praise still more: „de Raziâ, haud aequè promptum definire est. Factum ejus probum? ambigiter, neque Sacra dicunt, nisi *Nobiliter* et *Viriliter* fecisse: *Bene* and *Laudabiliter* non dicunt.“

Here again theological motives operated far more strongly than mere want of due insight into the real meaning of the words and case at issue. On the one hand, namely, Augustinus was not by any means clear with himself about the exact measure of Divine authority which ought to be accorded to the second book of the Maccabees as likewise to sundry other apocryphal writings of the Old Testament. Vide the passages from his de doctrina christiana, lib. II, c. 8, de civit. Dei, lib. XVII, c. 20, lib. XVIII, c. 36, and his (if it be a genuine work) Speculum as quoted in full in Eichhorn's interesting monograph on the Apocrypha¹⁾, e. g. . . . „in quibus sunt et Machabaeorum libri (duo), quos non Judaei, sed *ecclesia* pro canonicis habet, propter quorundam martyrum passiones“ (cf. 2 Macc. VI, 19 with Hebr. XI, 35). Indeed, the Council of Carthage anno 397 had by its 47th Canon put the second book of the Maccabees into the Canon, and even Hieronymus (in his well known praef. in libb. Salomonis) had declared „Sicut ergo Judith et Tobiae et Machabaeorum libros legit ecclesia, sed eos inter canonicas scripturas non recipit: sic et haec duo volumina, viz. Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Wisdom, legat (legit) ad aedificationem plebis, non ad auctoritatem ecclesiasticorum dogmatum confirmandam.“ We may,

¹⁾ Einleitung in die apocryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments, 1795, pp. 277, 288, 412, 338, 204—206, 77.

therefore, easily explain to ourselves Augustine's more or less delicate scruples about the passage in question. And, on the other hand, Lipsius, he having become a convert to Catholicism, and even in the form of Jesuitism, could not fail to bear in mind that the Council of Trent in its fourth Session had formally mentioned the first and the *second* book of the Maccabees in that decree on canonical scriptures which begins solemnly and emphatically thus: „sacrorum vero librorum Indicem huic decreto adscribendum censuit, ne cui dubitatio suboriri possit, quinam sint, qui ab ipsa Synodo suscipiuntur.“

Thence, many of our modern Protestants have not failed, in their arguments against the Catholic Church, to employ as one of their weapons this very case of Razis by way of ridiculing and condemning the Romanist fixation of the Canon of the O. T. Passing by abler German and English theologians, e. g. Crusius and Doddridge, I will single out Dr. Hugh Mc Neile ¹⁾ as at present one of our most conspicuous polemical champions, whose line of argument is simply this: the unmistakeable praise of a suicide in the passage before us is an *internal*, a *moral* testimony against the inspiration, i. e. the divine infallibility, of the second book of the Maccabees. But, looking at this matter more closely, is the force of this argument so formidable as the clergyman under mention would fain have his hearers suppose? Four remarks quickly suggest themselves to us.

1. Who can prove from any passage in what orthodox Protestants call the Canon of the O. T. that the ancient Jews ever thought or judged differently of any similar case of suicide? That in the Laws, the Prophets or the Hagiographa lawgiver, prophet, or historian would have spoken or written differently of it? Nay, is it not perfectly clear from what we have said in the preceding Chapter that the author of the book of Judges would have penned the story of Razis' death in just the same *spirit* as the author of the second book of the Maccabees has done, since the Jews themselves, as we heard, up to this day place the death of Samson and that of Razis in exactly the same category? Where in the so-called revelations of the O. T. is there a revelation which assures us that absolutely divine and eternally valid moral truth interdicts suicide in any and every case, and under all imaginable circumstances, nay, even inter-

¹⁾ Vide his Sermon against the doctrine of Purgatory, p. 6.

dicts suicide at all positively and distinctly? To be sure, if a direct prohibition or a clear denunciation of suicide be one of the necessary tests of divine inspiration, the second book of the Maccabees is not inspired, nor — this is the dilemma — is the book of the Judges; and, of consequence, if canonicity be a recognition of divine inspiration, the book of the Judges ought, on the very same ground as the second book of the Maccabees, to be excluded from the Canon; for, if our inferences are to be consistent with our premises, we must argue thus: inasmuch as the canonical writings of the O. T. do not either by their communications actually enunciate, or by their spirit really postulate, an essentially different view of the act of Raxis, the second book of the Maccabees might, *in spite* of the circumstance under mention, be canonical, — not to say, would be, *in consequence* of this very circumstance, as one item at least, — entitled to such reverence as canonicity at once presupposes and ensures.

2. If we turn to the Thirty Nine Articles of our Protestant Episcopal Church, we read therein (Art. VI. „Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation“) what follows. „And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are ... and the second book of the Maccabees.“ Manners? *Ethics*, from ἦθος or ἔθος, manner; *Morals*, from mos, mores, manner! The said limitation leaves a suspicious and dangerous length of tether, if I mistake not. *Ethical* value, not to say, validity, is willingly ascribed by our Church to the Apocrypha, though *dogmatical* authority be manifestly denied to them; but, is suicide, then, not a perfectly and purely so-called ethical question, and not half so much or at all a dogmatical one? Moreover, of what real worth are Dogmatics of any sort, unless they be a holy stem upon which right Ethics grow, or, vice versâ, Ethics, unless they be pure waters that flow out of a clear fountain of right Dogmatics? I for one deliberately withhold my subscription from the said clause in the said Article, as well as from many other clauses in many other Articles. Stupidity and ignorance are as little orthodoxy as hypocrisy is virtue; and people ought to be taught to have a thoughtful conscience and a discerning judgment, and to conform thereto, whether they conform or do not conform to any ecclesiastical polity whatsoever. Seeing for one's self and truth unto one's self are always a sign

and proof of spiritual life of some sort; but subscription and profession as mere „pick-locks“ to sensual quiet and worldly preferment are something very kindred to spiritual death, self-deceiving not, but others-deceiving, which is worse; sheerest indifferentism, if sharply defined. Truth a man may not have; but a conviction he can and ought to have: — and at all events, to strive for it constitutes the kernel of all vital Religion, every thing else being mere shell of human conceit.

3. The Catholic Church owes several of its doctrines to the second book of the Maccabees, and, therefore, very naturally holds it in considerable estimation, e. g. the doctrine that the Saints in Heaven intercede with God for men, and that God hears them (ch. V, 12—16), and the doctrine that one ought to pray for the dead, and offer propitiatory sacrifices for them that they may in the next world obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation (ch. XII, 39—46). The Protestant Church, justly and wisely rejecting those doctrines, as justly and wisely set down the book itself at its proper value, i. e. as a composition from which we learn what religious notions and moral views the Jews of those days entertained, be they sound and judicious, or, be they erroneous and pernicious. Thus, also, in the instance before us there is a dogmatic as well as an ethical element. The latter is this: if a Jew be persecuted for the sake of his religion, and in danger of falling into the hands of his Gentile enemies, it is permitted to commit suicide, it is better to do so than to get into the power of the Pagan foe. And Catholics as well as Protestants reject it. The former is this: that our present human body will arise again: „he invoked the Lord of life and breath to restore them (*ταῦτα*, viz. his bowels) unto him“ (v. 42). And Protestants as well as Catholics receive it. Yet, both elements were, doubtless, equally true to Razis himself or, rather, to the author of our book, and, probably, to the generality of Israelites in those troubled times of expiring heroism. Therefore, as historical evidences they may and must be unquestionably interesting to us; their dogmatic and ethical correctness or incorrectness remain simply matters for each individual's own consideration and decision.

4. Doubtless, the Jews themselves would not have excluded the second book of the Maccabees from the Canon solely on account of the pro-suicidal passage above discussed; and I doubt much, whether Hieronymus, whose verdict our Articles have adopted, himself would

have done so; for, as we shall learn in Section V, this same church-father bestowed most unqualified and enthusiastic praise on such christian women as *slew themselves* to preserve their chastity. Wherefore, I cannot but regard Dr. M^c Neile's anti-catholic controversial argument as singularly uncircumspect and altogether inconclusive. It may flatter our predilections, serve our prejudices, hoodwink our judgments; but, nevertheless, it is little better than a mere eloquent phrase „full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.“

Doing battle against the theoretical falsities and the practical encroachments of Romanism and Jesuitism is most estimable and seasonable; but only the vulnerable points of the system ought to be attacked and only trusty weapons ought to be used. And, as it seems to me, neither is the reception of the Apocrypha into the Canon, nor the laudation of Razis in the Apocrypha an all-important question for controversy. The whole humbug and humdrum of Fathers and Hierarchies, Fasts and Festivals, Saints and Relics, Mechanisms and Monkisms, Breviaries and Nunneries call for our Protestant Protests, and afford deeper as well as safer themes for platform and pulpit argumentation and denunciation. The influence of saints, the value of penances, the merits of alms-giving, the potency of self-mortification may be inferentially demonstrated from canonical books also (cf. e. g. 1 Kings XV, 4, 5; XXI, 27—29; Daniel IV, 24; X, 1—3), just as Samson's case has been made to prove the lawfulness of suicide by divine inspiration as well as Razis' case, *which latter likewise sundry catholic writers have thus interpreted.*¹⁾ — English Bible Societies may object to even binding up the Apocrypha with the canon into one volume, and a Hengstenberg and a Stier, both of them ultra-orthodox and ultra-evangelical, call them fanatical and ignorant for doing so: more momentous disputes than this one is, seem to me nearer to and worthier of the essence and vocation of Christianity at this time of day.

¹⁾ E. g. by the Jesuit Serarius: *commentarius in sacros divinatorum biblicorum libros*, Tobiam, Judith, Esther, Machabaeos, 1617, p. 474sq. Francis Victoria likewise, as quoted by him. Vide, too, what we shall have to communicate about the Circumcelliones in Sect. V.

CHAPTER III. MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE (i. e. p. C.).

§. 53. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

No matter, whether we are now living, according to Jewish computation, in the year 5615 of the creation of the world, or, according to Christian calculation, in the year 5837. In what exact year after the so-called creation of the world Jesus of Nazareth was born, whether 222 years sooner or later, is an idle question, which archaeological arithmeticians may safely be left to discuss and decide as they like; but that Jesus of Nazareth really was born eighteen or nineteen centuries ago, and that this historic fact, undeniable as ever fact was or can be, has not induced the Jews as a body to date henceforward *anno Domini* instead of *anno Mundi*: this is a subject for gravest wonderment, and an event which every well-wisher to his species cannot but most deeply deplore. As many of the Gentile peoples as have understood and acknowledged this same simple fact to be the most momentous phenomenon in our earth's story, to form a signal break in the courses of the ages, to afford a welcome resting-place from which mankind might start afresh in the career of dogmatic conviction, moral endeavor, social development: so many of them have a „modern literature“, and they, in a fruitful sense of the term, alone. The Jews, therefore, cannot, strictly speaking, be said to have any. For, what turning-point was there, for instance, in the fourth or the sixth century of our era that could warrant e. g. Rabbi Willstätter¹⁾ in dating the „modern history“ of the Jews from the year 500 p. C.? Neither their hostile rebellion against, nor their sophisticated mockery at, nor their would-be philosophical indifference to the spiritual meaning and power of the fact above alluded

¹⁾ Vide his *allgemeine Geschichte des Israelitischen Volkes*, 1836, p. 142.

to has availed aught, or could, or ever will: Judaism *died*, when Jesus was *born*; and all wilful or ignorant denial of this parallelism must prove fateful, nay, in many respects even fatal, to the deniers themselves. Thence the doom of Israeldom during the last eighteen centuries; and thence, also, the extreme motleyneess of what we shall take the liberty of calling, for convenience' sake, modern Jewish literature: a sort of thing commencing with semi-classical adaptations, running through quibbling fixations, and finally issuing into speculations which stand almost equally aloof from both Moses and Jesus. At least, as far as our specific topic will call upon us to take notice of the views entertained and promulgated by Jewish teachers and writers on the theme under mention, we shall find these hastily sketched characteristics neither inappropriate nor over-drawn.

§. 54. JOSEPHUS (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

Whilst not hesitating in the least to concede to Josephus consummate ability in his threefold capacity of captain, historian, scholar, I will at once frankly avow that the impression which a perusal of his own multifarious writings has left upon me is most unfavorable to him as a man. He was evidently not stanchly orthodox in his Judaism; yet we might easily forgive him this, since it might have proved difficult for any person of his acuteness and culture to sympathize deeply and fully with what Judaism had degenerated into in his time; but far graver is the accusation that he was apparently not genuinely religious according to any creed whatsoever, or, if you like, according to no specific so-called creed under the sun, i. e. according to what all the best among the Heathen in his age and in every age have somewhat unanimously accounted humanly noble and well-pleasing unto the Divinity; for cowardice, time-serving, selfish intrigue, hypocritical falsehood never were and never will be, in the estimate of the wise and noble, religion or virtue of any sort: and in suchlike alone Josephus would seem to me to have had a real and fruitful belief. Though, if I mistake not, a discerning and an impartial reader who has had the patience to wade through his works can scarcely avoid arriving at a similar opinion about him, I will in passing state that the gentle and devout Cowper says¹⁾ of him „he

¹⁾ Works II, p. 101 in a letter to W. Unwin.

was a temporizer too, and courted the favor of his Roman masters at the expense of his own creed, or else an infidel and absolutely disbelieved it"; and that Jost, the most painstaking and independent among the modern Jewish historians, frequently applies to his celebrated fellow-Israelite the epithets cowardly, dexterous, cunning, vain, adulatory, and in fine characterizes him as one who wished to please everybody, and covertly always endeavored to flatter the Romans.¹⁾ — Which strictures on the *man* appeared to me preliminarily necessary, because they will prove exceedingly aidful to us as furnishing us with good grounds for our skepticism and disavowal respecting the utterances of the *author* on our immediate topic.

When military leader of the Jews in their last war against the Romans, Josephus found himself, along with about forty Jewish captains, in the subterraneous passages of the city of Jotapat anno 67 p. C. so circumvented by the enemy that the only choice left to him and them was the unenviable one between captivity and death. His colleagues unanimously declared themselves inclined and resolved rather to slay themselves than to fall into the hands of the Heathen victors; he himself, however, in no wise participating in their inclination or relishing their resolution, made a vigorous effort to combat the justice and wisdom of their views on the matter by delivering himself of an oration argumentative against and dissuasive from self-slaughter. This same harangue we have already alluded to e. g. in §. 34, and quoted from; but it is not only so beautiful and rational, but likewise so celebrated and important that our duty imperatively demands that we should dwell upon it in detail and at considerable length, if we would see its various bearings in their due light.

I. Its authenticity and integrity, i. e. what therein was at a later period by Josephus himself put in it.

We all know full well that, as a matter of course, the ancient classical historians, e. g. Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, were in the habit of composing *more or less* each in his own fashion such speeches as they deemed characteristically suitable to the chief personages in their respective narratives, it being sufficient for the said historiographers to know that the said personages really did speak, i. e. say something pertinent and requisite, on the occasions at issue, or, even

¹⁾ Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsre Tage nach den Quellen bearbeitet, 1820 ff., Th. I, pp. 185, 230 ff., and especially the excursus to Th. II, Buch 6: über den Geschichtsschreiber Joseph als solchen.

perhaps only to surmise that they might have spoken, or, to infer that they ought to have spoken; and what those historians chiefly aimed at, and all they really could effect, was to let the speech be suitable, as to the person speaking, so to the occasion on which it was spoken, or supposed and represented as having been spoken. Josephus, now, like Caesar, Frederick the Great and others, is the leading hero in his own story of the Jewish War, and, certainly, no mean hero, either in his own sight or in reality: why, then, should he not have indulged in the above mentioned undoubted privilege and practice of antique historiography on his own account and behalf, and naïvely make himself in the book before us utter a speech longer and better, than the one he under the circumstances really had uttered, or, if we scrupulously consult both inward and outward testimonies, was in the least likely to have uttered. My reasons for conjecturing thus are briefly as follow. Firstly. Not even so clever and cool a man as Josephus was, can by any possibility be supposed to have delivered on the spur of the moment in a situation so imminent and critical and in a state of mind so disturbed and apprehensive an oration pre-eminently distinguished for ornate conciseness, logical arrangement and varied erudition. Secondly. Being, despite his sagacity, yet no prophet, he cannot reasonably be imagined to have foreseen that he would want it, and, therefore, we may not fancy that he, as it were, extemporized it by rote, like certain modern orators and wits, i. e. elaborately composed it beforehand and then, when the fit opportunity presented itself, recited it memoriter, as if it were an impromptu. Thirdly. Josephus, when introducing this oration in a written form to the notice of his readers, and speaking of himself in the third person, says expressly ἤρχετο φιλοσοφεῖν, thus giving us to understand, or, if you like, admitting, that he therein *philosophized*. It is, now (as I have read e. g. in Eichhorn's above quoted monograph on the Apocrypha, p. 151, note, where φιλοσοφεῖται and φιλοσοφοῦσι are given as occurring in Philo's quod omnis probus liber and de vita contempl., apud Mangey, II, pp. 458, 475) quite true that the term φιλοσοφεῖν was used by the later (Alexandrine) Jews, e. g. the Essenes, to whom Josephus had belonged three years before he became a Pharisee, and the Therapeuts; but, as I am led to believe, they applied this word chiefly, if not solely, to the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, more especially the narratives of Moses, for philosophical purposes; and, most cer-

tainly, no suchlike feats of allegorical interpretation are by Josephus attempted in the speech now under mention. Therefore, since the said speech in its present form is tinctured with *Greek* and *Roman* wisdom, I should incline to suppose that Josephus himself hints to his readers that it is not a purely *Jewish* effusion and argumentation, that we may and must seek for many of its elements in Greek or Roman schools, where there was *philosophy*, as in reality so in terminology. And, indeed, if Josephus' express object had been to give his *Pagan* protectors and patrons a proof of the very ample knowledge he *subsequently* in his „otium cum dignitate“ at Rome had acquired of classical lore, he could scarcely have done so more effectually and strikingly than by means of this same anti-suicidal oration, inasmuch as, with one or two slight exceptions, there is really nothing *characteristically Jewish* in or about it. Witness, for instance, the following axiomata or dicta: suicide is a flight from God, the kindest of masters, and cf. Socrates, §. 24; it is in and by itself an unmanly and a mad act, and cf. Aristoteles, §. 26; the soul is a part of the Godhead in us, something immortal, a divine Depositum, and cf. Cicero, §. 30; the Giver of life alone has a right to take it away again, and cf. Pythagoras, §. 23; the souls of suicides will, by dint and in course of the metempsychosis on their first stage or in their first phase be imprisoned in the darkest places of Hades, and cf. Plato, §. 25, and Virgil, §. 17. Nay, Josephus even appeals, as we saw in §. 34, to the anti-suicidal laws of the Athenians with which he was, as we must suppose, not particularly familiar during the Judean period of his life. Therefore, taking all this into due consideration, we do not hesitate to assume and to affirm that we have here before us a composition elaborated in after-years by our historian at his leisure, when he with the aid of Roman warriors and Greek scholars enlarged the original Hebrew journal he had previously composed, and translated it into Greek. At the same time we, of course, do not deny or even doubt that Josephus really did argue to his fellow-captains against the lawfulness of suicide, and endeavor to dissuade them from slaying themselves, his harangue being, probably, at the time of its delivery in Hebrew sufficiently short and practical, but only maintain that it owes, as its extant Greek form, so likewise its scholarlike order and rhetorical development to such interlardings and spicings as he thought fit in after-time to borrow from those writings of Greek and Roman

thinkers and poets of his zealous study of which and accurate acquaintance with which he has given us manifold other proofs.

II. Its sincerity, i. e. the self-contradictions of Josephus.

We, furthermore, venture to assert that the object of Josephus, when he pronounced the harangue under mention, was far less to denounce suicide than to save his own life; and this point, which is even much more important than the former one for the purposes of our present investigation, we will endeavor to render by a very few words at least highly probable. In the later portion of the historical work before us, Josephus informs his readers — wishing and expecting them, no doubt, to credit his assertions and narratives on this score — that he had received from God in a dream or vision the commission to prophesy something to Vespasianus who was *then* commander-in-chief of the Roman army in Judea, and that his anxiety to deliver faithfully the said message had induced him to exert himself to preserve his own life amid the imminent perils to which it was exposed at this juncture. We must, namely, not forget that Josephus, according to his own account, was frequently favored with prophetic dreams; but it is surely at this time of day scarcely worth while to trouble ourselves so far as to enquire into the peculiar faculties and privileges which he in this direction possessed. Had he been either a superstitious or an enthusiastic man, we might, haply, experience but little difficulty in ascribing suchlike things to his credulity or his imaginativeness, and remember what Judaism in those days fabled about the well-known bath-kol (daughter of a voice, i. e. echo = forebodement), and those foretelling practices to which the Essenes, in their mystical cynism or theosophic philosophy, are said to have applied themselves, and in which they are averred to have arrived at considerable dexterity, fitting themselves thereto by manifold lustrations and diligent study of the utterances of the O. T. prophets. Indeed, many good and wise men also under Christian influences up to the present day have avowed their disinterested and implicit faith in much of what is, perchance, not specifically different, whether we call it Miracle, Vision, Mesmerism, Animal Magnetism, Clairvoyance, or Somnambulism. Thus, for instance, the ancient ecclesiastical historians Eusebius (*vita* Const. I, c. 28 and c. 47) and Zozomen (*H. E.*, I, c. 3 and c. 8) firmly and, I doubt not, honestly believed in Constantine's well-known *ἐν τοῦτω βίχα*; under the influence of mediaeval catholicism the old chroniclers devoutly narrate

that e. g. the deceased saint Neot acted as standard-bearer and prophet of victory in one of our own noble Alfred's glorious and decisive battles against the Danes,¹⁾ and in most recent times Friedrich von Meyer (*Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*) and Justinus Kerner (*Geschichte der Echeria von Brerort*) have lent their amiable and potent voices to kindred phenomena as unto facts. However, our incidental mention of Constantine and his visionary celestial banner may easily help us to another possible and far more probable solution of Josephus' case; for these two men (*mutandis mutatis*, of course) were, I ween, not altogether unlike the one the other, neither of them being truly great, because neither of them truly good, if we look not so much at their deeds as at their entire characters, at their deepest natures, and demand clear thoughts, noble feelings, worthy motives. The various visions and dreams, then, of both these men on sundry occasions proved to be all of them *very convenient*, and turned out to be, when interpreted *backwards*, i. e. after their fulfilment, undeniably true, so that they look to any unprejudiced and dispassionate student of history and of the human heart marvellously like the offsprings of *policy* and *fiction post eventum*. — But, to proceed: unfortunately, Josephus' harangue failed to produce the wished-for effect upon its hearers. Still adhering to their fatal determination, they died each by the other's hand, one alone excepted, and Josephus, by some unexplained and almost inexplicable contrivance of his own, most cunningly managed to remain over, side by side with the said one. Contrivance? Nay, we unhesitatingly say, by a *fraud* of some sort, though he himself gives us to understand that it was a *miracle*! The affair turned upon a drawing of lots, a procedure which was deemed a sacred rite among the Hebrews (*vide* Prov. XVI, 33), continued as such among the early Christians (*vide* Acts I, 26), and, as we know, is still upheld and practised in a similar faith and manner among the Moravians. When, however, we take into earnest consideration the indubitable fact that in the middle ages also all sorts of trials and chances were called and believed to be a „God's Verdict“ (*Gottesurtheil*), from walking over red hot iron for purposes of proof up to the measuring of swords in judicial combat, and remember how matters were occasionally managed, and what strange issues occasionally presented themselves,

¹⁾ *Vide* Giles's life and times of Alfred the Great, p. 234, note d.

we cannot but experience a not easily silenced doubt about the real divine interference as providentia specialissima in suchlike processes, and feel strongly inclined to view them as rather a tempting of God than a trusting to God, or, if you like this better, evidences of a childish yielding to merest chance what ought to be, if a case of any real moment, decided by an appeal to Human Reason or Legal Justice. And, as regards the specific incident under mention, we are at all events warranted in demanding better evidence than Josephus' own authority, ere we could even for a single moment believe that he owed his rescue and survival to anything but some mere *shrewd trick* of his own fertile brain's inventing.

If what we have hitherto advanced may be presumed to go some way towards pre-possessing us against the probability of Josephus' sincere antagonism to suicide on *Jewish* and *religious* grounds, it yet remains for us to advert to numerous circumstances traceable in this same writer's own works which shall convince us that, if any clear and positive principles whatsoever on the subject of suicide be fairly ascribable to Josephus, such principles were unmistakeably and decidedly *favorable* to it, anyhow under certain circumstances, if not indeed under all circumstances. We, therefore, have not been able to induce ourselves to subscribe even to the discreet and learned Lücke's incidental verdict in his beautiful commentary on the gospel of John¹⁾ on one of the anti-suicidal elements in Josephus' oration. „Die rhetorische Stelle des Josephus scheint mir mehr seine besondere Meinung, als die Volkseinstellung der Zeit auszudrücken.“ Still less can we feel ourselves called upon to draw the inference which the diligent and unprejudiced Bauer has drawn in his elaborate work on the Old Testament²⁾ that because Josephus, who was himself a Pharisee, has contended against suicide with good reasons, consequently also „die Mißbilligung des Selbstmordes wahrscheinlich ein pharisäischer Lehrsatz war.“

As we shall see in the next chapter of this Section, our author had to recount in his various writings a very considerable number of cases of suicide, more especially among his more or less cotemporary fellow-countrymen and fellow-believers. And — what happens? Firstly. He does not on any occasion whatsoever utter a single

¹⁾ Kommentar über das Evangelium Johannis, edit. 3, pp. 299, 300. ²⁾ Biblische Moral des Alten Testaments, 1803, Th. II, p. 454.

syllable of disapprobation of the deed.¹⁾ If, for instance, he declare the ὄλεθρος αὐθαίρετος of a certain number of Jews to be in his opinion οἰκτρότερος than the fate from which they had fled, we know that οἰκτρός has invariably a physical, not an ethical, signification, and must in general judge of suchlike epithets by the light which a whole book sheds, as was the case, for instance, with the „vanitas“ of Tacitus (§. 29), where Walther and Döderlein's united note, to which I there merely alluded, helps us to the only admissible *qualifying* interpretation. „Vanitate exitus, i. e. ambizioso exitu. Statius veniam ab Imperatore impetravit et postquam impetraverat sua manu cecidit, ut urbi ostentaret rerum aliquod facinus, quippe moriens, cum vivere possit. Id vero dici poterat vanitatis exemplum. Nam si amore civitatis aut moerore calamitatis publicae vitam sperneret, non debebat veniam accipere, sed contemnere. Alia res fuit in Silano; is *absolutus* sua manu cecidit.“ Walther. „Nempe *acceperat* non est ἔβαλεν, sed ἐδέξατο, dari sibi passus est.“ Döderlein. And Josephus not only even sometimes immoderately extols the deed of self-destruction, calling e. g. the voluntary death of Phasaelus valiant and glorious, but he distinctly bestows his enthusiastic admiration upon that brilliant and detailed oration which Eleazar, another Jewish captain, pronounced somewhat later, viz. anno 73 p. C. in the city of Massedah, in favor and defence of suicide. — Secondly. Josephus — and this is the chief evidence we had to offer — himself avows to Vespasian his own disbelief of the anti-suicidal arguments which he had adduced and expounded in his own but too celebrated harangue. „Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive. But I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had I not been sent by God to thee, *I know what was the law of the Jews in this case, and how it becomes generals to die*“ (ἤδεν τὸν Ἰουδαίων νόμον, καὶ πῶς στρατηγοῖς ἀποθνήσκειν πρέπει). These words admit of but one interpretation, viz. (vide Whiston's notes on them) „Jewish commanders (or soldiers) are bound to kill themselves rather than go into slavery among the Heathen.“ It is true, as nobody can fail to know, in the O. T. Canon no suchlike suicide-countenancing and suicide-enjoining prescription is to be met with; and thence this confession

¹⁾ The reader is referred for the following allusions and quotations to de bello Jud. libb. IV, c. 5, §. 1; c. 9, §. 9; I, c. 13, §. 10; VII, c. 8, §§. 7, 8; III, c. 8, §. 9; VI, c. 3, §. 2.

of ethical faith on the part of Josephus quite non-pluses or sorely puzzles christian commentators, and they conjecture to and fro about some „vain doctrine, or interpretation“ which they with most amusing and puerile vagueness ascribe to either the Pharisees, or the Essenes, or the Herodians, or — whomsoever else you may choose to fix upon. We will readily grant that the said Josephan creed is not by any means „a just consequence from any law of God delivered by Moses“, or, indeed, by anybody else, as far as our copy of the O. T. can instruct us; but, to be silent on the peculiar, yet indisputable, circumstance that Josephus sometimes quotes passages from the O. T. which are *not* in our copies of it, we, on the one hand, saw in chapt. I of this Sect. that an expressly different creed is anything but inferible from either the Thora, the Prophets, or the Hagiographa; and, on the other hand, we are bound to admit that the said Josephan creed was, palpably, an essential element in Jewish ethics in the age of our historian; for (vide also the next § on Philo) he himself places it e. g. in the most explicit and forcible words on the lips of Eleazar. „But certainly our hands are still at liberty, and we have a sword in them; let them then be subservient to us in our glorious design: let us die before we become slaves under our enemies, and let us go out of the world, together with our children, and our wives, in a state of freedom! *This is that which our laws command us to do* (ταῦθ' ἡμᾶς οἱ νόμοι κελεύουσι); this is that which our wives and children crave at our hands; nay, God himself hath brought this necessity upon us (τούτων τὴν ἀνάγκην θεὸς ἀπέσταλκε), while the Romans desire the contrary and are afraid lest any of us should die before we are taken We, therefore, who have been brought up in a discipline of our own (οἰκοθενησάμενοι), ought to become an example to others of our readiness to die“ Are we not, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians (Eleazar has been speaking of the Bramins), and by our own cowardice to lay a base reproach upon the laws of our country? (τοὺς πατρίους νόμους ἀσχερῶς ὑβρίζοντες;) — —

III. Its characteristics, i. e. what is specifically Jewish or Josephan in it.

Since, as I have already shown, almost all the leading anti-suicidal arguments which Josephus has employed in this questionable speech have already, because borrowed from the philosophy and mythology of classical antiquity, come before us in the disquisitions

contained in previous chapters of this Treatise, it will not be necessary here to renew our acquaintance with them; and I will, therefore, limit myself to such assertions as, being altogether new to us, are calculated to take us by surprise, and must needs be examined into. There are two of this kind: one is of a *legislative* character, and it we shall discuss in the next Chapter; the other has an *eschatological* cast, and to it — it branches off into a *twofold* direction — we must devote the remainder of this §.

1. Josephus assures his Jewish hearers that the souls of suicides will be received into what he terms *ἄδης σκοτιώτερος*.

This latter epithet we may render with Beer by dark, or, with Dindorf by darker, or, with Whiston by darkest: the exact degree of comparison is here not of much consequence, unless we should, perchance, desire to infer that, according to Josephus' notion, Hades was susceptible of *graduated* darkness; if, however, my memory do not deceive me — and I have no Greek grammar at hand to consult — the comparative has in Greek occasionally superlative force, and one might compare in this same speech the antithetically used express superlative *χωρὸν οὐρανοῦ τὸν ἀγιώτατον*. More important than the adjective is, at all events, the substantive: where and what was, according to Josephus' notion, this same Hades? Whiston has incorporated (vide vol. IV, pp. 358—361) with his English version of „the whole *genuine* works“ of our author „an extract from Josephus' Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades“; but, if I may rely upon my own humble judgment in critical questions of this nature, the said fragment is unquestionably *spurious*, since it bears strong internal evidence of being nothing more or less than a *Christian* fabrication. From what other source, then, can we gather information about what Josephus exactly meant by Hades? Did he mean the Tartarus of the Greeks, the Gehenna of the Hebrews, i. e. a place of severest torment and final punishment, identical with that locality which we are in the habit of denominating Hell? The often quoted Benedictine Calmet answers this question without further ado in the affirmative, and grounds upon the passage before us the following assertion: „and the souls of such persons, i. e. suicides, were believed, viz. by the Jews, to be plunged into *Hell*.“ However, so uncritical a compiler's answer does not satisfy us for two reasons. Firstly. The immediate hearers of Josephus forthwith undauntedly and cheerfully rushed voluntarily into the arms of a future world;

and — would they not have been somewhat likely to have paused a while, ere they needlessly hastened into the very jaws of such a monster of terrors unto them, if they had understood — always supposing, of course, Josephus to have made this speech to them — the ἀδης σκοπιωτερος in *this* sense? Secondly. Eleazar, when encouraging his Jewish brethren to suicide, gives utterance (of course, Josephus himself may, and it is probable that he did so, have let Eleazar philosophize here in his, Josephus', own spirit) to the following quite opposite sentiments. „For the laws of our country, and of God himself, have from ancient times, and as soon as ever we could use our reason, continually taught us, and our forefathers have corroborated the same doctrine by their actions, and by their bravery of mind, that it is life that is a calamity to men, and not death; for the last — (NB. though *suicidal*; for, as we know, the entire drift of Eleazar's oration is to exhort his hearers to immediate self-slaughter) — affords our souls their liberty, and sends them by a removal into their own place of purity, where they are to be insensible of all sorts of misery (εἰς τὸν οἰκεῖον καὶ καθαρὸν ἀφίης τόπον ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι, πάσης συμφορᾶς ἀπαθείς ἐσομένας). How, then, could Calmet venture to ascribe so unconditionally the „belief“ which he construed out of the above words of Josephus to the „Jews“ in general? — Or, did Josephus mean the Hades of the classical writers, the Scheol of his Hebrew brethren, i. e. simply a region in the realm of the dead the indwellers of which suffer merely comparative discomfort and partial misery, without being exactly doomed to extreme and unending tortures? Speaking *quite in general*, it has ever appeared to me to argue a great want of clearness and acuteness of mental vision not to be aware of the impenetrable uncertainty which necessarily hangs around such a question as this. We should have to write a whole dissertation, were we to desire to try to fix some little even about what Scheol in the O. T. and Hades in the N. T. *probably* means, and far more erudite and ingenious persons than myself have written entire dissertations already for this purpose the one or the other of which I have perused, but without deriving such satisfaction as I might have coveted. Pearson in his work on the Apostolic Creed s. v. „descended into Hell“ has, if I recollect rightly, amassed an immense quantity of material on this subject which the inquisitive are requested to wade through, if they have the courage and patience. Their gain for their pains will, if the impression left

on my own mind is correct, be but small. It seems, however, altogether beyond dispute that the two Jewish sects to which Josephus had successively belonged, the Essenes and Pharisees, did believe in a sort of place of punishment for the wicked. The former said „that the wicked are exiled into a remote place, where cold and darkness reign and unceasing punishments torment them“; and the latter taught that „the wicked remain eternally incarcerated under the earth, burdened with everlasting punishments“ (cf. our author himself *de bello Jud. lib. II, c. 12*, and *Antiq. lib. XVIII, c. 2*, where he discusses these sects). But, speaking *with especial reference to our topic*, my own impression, since the above assertion of Josephus is entirely without support in Jewish eschatology, is that it was just as little a *Jewish* tenet at all as it was Josephus' own *sincere* conviction: he wrote it down, I imagine, as a mere reminiscence and imitation of Virgil and Plato, and, additionally, without having given unto himself a clear account of the right meaning of what he thus remembered and imitated.

2. Josephus states to his Jewish audience that some punishment is to be suffered by suicides in their posterity.

This is, without doubt, the general contents of his assertion; but the passage in which it is conveyed has appeared to sundry critics to labor under certain defects, and they have, therefore, taken more than ordinary pains to remedy the evil, whether real or only imaginary, by various emendatory conjectures which we must for a moment glance at, though the most recent editor, Dindorf anno 1847, has retained the most ancient and only textual reading which we shall also adhere to, and which runs thus: ὁ δὲ τούτων πατήρ Θεὸς εἰς ἐχθρόνους τιμωρεῖται τοὺς θάνατον ὑβριστάς. We merely remark preliminarily that, on the one hand, e. g. Jost frequently urges in the notes to his already quoted work that the MSS. of Josephus are extremely defective through the negligence or ignorance of transcribers; and that, on the other hand, over-nicety of scholarship is apt sometimes to burn holes into the text instead of removing textual stains by an indiscreet and a superfluous application of conjectural caustic. Havercamp already, in his standard edition of 1726, had suggested πατέρων instead of θάνατον; and Michaelis (in one of the notes to his *Μεταφράσις Νεῦτ*) proposes, being of opinion that θάνατον affords no sense suitable to either the matter or the context, to substitute πατὴρ, and then interprets as follows: God is their

father; consequently, whoever kills himself and thus goes out of the world without God's will, is a father-despiser (*Vaterverächter*). He, however, adds that also *θάπτον*, earlier, had suggested itself to him so that, if (but he himself objects to himself that in this case some difficulty would arise about the *ὑβρισταί*) this were the correct reading, the sense would be: *qui citius, i. e. ante diem, sibi manus inferunt*. Cardwell, if the memorandum I made when I consulted his edition do not mislead me, receives *τοὺς τῶν πατέρων ὑβρισταί* into the text, but in his appended notes refers *πατέρων* to the progenitors. Leaving these various more or less clever hypotheses to their own merits, I will now briefly state how I (with both Whiston and Dindorf, judging at least from their respective versions) explain the ordinarily received reading to myself: *ὑβρισταί* here, no doubt, refers to suicide, and the disputed word *θάπτον* which admits, I think, of a twofold acceptation (cf. the Latin *alteruter* and *alterutrimque*) may or must be regarded as, at 'most, less an obscure than a superfluous addition: and God, the father of them, i. e. of suicides, will also punish in their descendants those, i. e. the ancestors, who have committed iniquity against *either*, i. e. soul or body, or, against *both*, i. e. soul and body.

Quitting, however, this tedious, but necessary, verbal disquisition, we now proceed to the subject-matter, and, first of all, ask: upon what authority did Josephus make this prophetic threat? The only passage of the O. T. which, as far as I can guess, could by any possibility be brought to bear upon it, is that well-known appendix (Exod. XX, 5, 6) to one of the commandments of the Mosaic decalogue: „visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.“ Speaking quite generally, this menace has something strange and awful, not to say unjust and barbarous, about it, in whatsoever light we may choose to view it. Its position in the Decalogue, however, seems to restrict its reference to *idolatry*, i. e. to that very sin from which the Israelites were destined to be kept specially aloof, and to which they at the same time were in a most especial measure prone; and, indeed, in this point of view the said threat evinces and justifies itself as a more or less natural and necessary effect of a cause. If we, namely, bear in mind the power of parental example in general, and add thereto the solemn and emphatic manner in which filial obedience was enjoined upon Hebrew children in this identical De-

calogue, the supposition lies on the threshold that, if Hebrew parents themselves became idolaters („hated Jehovah“; for is this not one of the many strong Hebraic circumlocutions for indulging in idolatrous rites?), such idolatry would be imitated, followed, inherited, propagated by, through, among their offspring, *idolatrous children* becoming thus, as it were, divinely punished, in the very fact of their being idolaters, for their parents' apostasy, so that Moses appeals, legislating in this particular as in most other particulars, rather politically and prudentially than ethically and religiously, to the well-known both physical and moral parental tenderness of his people for the purpose of inducing them to keep allegiance to their own peculiar national faith and worship. — Less probable and suitable it would appear to me to interpret the passage at issue of disease, whether physical or mental (*vide* §. 18); for, in part, as far as such a fact is true, it requires no special teaching as if it were something peculiar, since experience verifies it all the world over, Nature pursuing herein her own appointed and, as it must seem to us, necessity-bound course; in part, it is at the utmost true to a certain extent only, as everybody knows without my telling; and, finally, suchlike mental or physical disease — and this is my chief objection to this exposition — appears to be all but entirely in most instances independent of the children themselves, of *their* „hating God“, being simply something *connate*, an injury and misery unto them equally inavertible and irreparable. — Aught else, as I take it, Moses can scarcely be presumed to have meant; for any *arbitrary* and *extraordinary* divine punishment inflicted upon *innocent* children on account of the misdeeds of their parents is a doctrine, at all events, utterly unworthy of the Supreme Being, and, if Moses taught it, he committed a deplorable human error which I for one would embolden myself to discountenance and reject, howsoever willing I may be to acknowledge that we, verily, know exceedingly little about what does or ought to constitute Divine Rule, as in its mercy so in its severity; and, moreover, to admit that (not to descend to such trivial illustrations and exemplifications as safely may be left to everybody's own reflections and experiences), if the forward look to the destiny of his offspring were cancelled from man's life-code, his virtue as he is, though not, perhaps, as he ought to be, would become deprived of one of its great levers. — Yet, the menace of which we are speaking, misunderstood perhaps, and

at all events conceived in too direct, too uncircumscribed, too exaggerated a manner, was so far calculated to work mischief (cf. e. g. 2 Kings XXIV, 3, 4; 1 Kings XXI, 28, 29) that in the O. T. times already we find passages which considerably *modify* and almost *nullify* it (vide Ezekiel XVIII, XXXIII, 10—20, and cf. Deut. XXIV, 16), the drift of which teachings of this comparatively late prophet was evidently more or less anti-Mosaic, and, no doubt, intended to be, as it really was, a *correction* suggested by clearer and deeper insight and culture. Nevertheless, as ancient notions and faiths are extremely difficult to uproot entirely, the Hebrew legislator rather than the Hebrew prophet would seem to have retained authority among the multitude of the later Jews, since we find in the days of Jesus his disciples asking him concerning the man who had been born blind: „Master, who did sin, this man, or *his parents*, that he was born blind?“ (John IX, 2). But the answer of Jesus, evading, as it was his wont, the mere dogmatic subtlety or popular superstition from which the question proceeded, contented himself with giving a flat denial to the verity of the one or the other supposition, and with opposing to this either-or a more sympathetic and benevolent reason for the melancholy phenomenon; or, speaking more strictly, he endeavored practically to remove the evil without condescending to theorize at all about its origin and cause. It is in such wise, too, I ween, that we, his disciples, should *meet* existing ill, not by sophistic either-ors, but by philanthropic counteracting exertions. The matter of „his parents“ explains itself in connexion with what we have already said; but more difficult is the matter of „this man“; for, since the question turns solely upon his being „born“ blind, the only hypothesis possible, in howsoever unfavorable a light it may and must place the understandings of the said „disciples“ is this: that they believed man could already individually sin prior to his actual birth, i. e. in the womb, and thus become so far guilty as to evoke Divine displeasure and punishment!!

Aye, and into Christianity itself, nevertheless, the spiritual or, rather, unspiritual essence of some such belief has passed over: not „to ponder too minutely“ *here and now* the entire theorem of imputed guilt as embodied in various items of Christian dogmatics, e. g. original sin, &c. — are not our whole usual conception and construction of the past persecutions and the present degradation of the Jewish race visibly traceable to something like a fulfilment of

yon Mosaic menace, inasmuch as we assume that the blood of him crucified has really — despite his own „Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do“ — come upon them „and upon their children?“

Returning, however, to Josephus: must or may we suppose him to have made a *specific* application of the said threat to suicide? Ere he could have done so with aught like even a show of reason or propriety, he would have had to take for granted that the Decalogue pronounces suicide an „iniquity“ which thing, as we saw in §. 48, it omits to do, so that such an application would be arbitrary and gratuitous in the extreme. Additionally, even if we were to concede for argument's sake that Josephus intended this, we should have to ask: of what sort would the *modus operandi* be? how could the punishment itself be effected and become manifest? In an immediately preceding portion of his speech, Josephus evidently alludes to the doctrine of the metempsychosis in regard to the ultimate fate of godly souls as an encouragement and instigation to a virtuous life and the non-commission of suicide; but this refers to the individuals themselves, not to their offspring, just as ancient Greek Pythagorism and before it the Hindoo Sastras, as we have seen, whilst turning the same tenet to anti-suicidal advantage, never extended its predicated baneful influence to the posterity of the slayer of himself. Indeed, why such a superfluous extension of divine displeasure and punishment? If man in a measure punishes, as it were, by legal procedure the children of a suicide, it is because, among other things, he is unable to reach with his punishments the suicide himself who has escaped all earthly jurisdiction; but God, on the contrary, has the transgressor himself forthwith in His own immediate power, and, consequently, need not in any measure transfer the punishment due unto him to those who, having done no ill, deserve rather pity than visitation. Nevertheless, if Josephus had any thought at all in connexion with this hopelessly obscure or utterly absurd passage, we cannot but assume that he really was alluding to the doctrine of the metempsychosis, though Michaelis prefers believing that our Jewish philosopher rather meant the resurrection of the body, and merely circumvested it with Gentile phraseology that it might commend itself to his Greek readers, or, at least, not appear ridiculous to them, and also render his nation ridiculous in their sight. But, what genuine light does Michaelis' hypothesis afford? None

that I can see. The entire matter simply remains as dark as ever. Moreover, the Jewish sects in the time of Josephus and Josephus himself with his half-digested accommodations made such a strange jumble of Greekism and Mosaism and other isms besides that it is difficult, nay, impossible to state or discern what their exact position to either of these two different tenets, howsoever essentially different the one may be from the other, really was. For instance. The Essenes indisputably believed in the *pre-existence* of the human soul in something very like Pythagorico-Platonic fashion; at least, Porphyry (de abst. lib. IV, c. 13) says of them: „for this opinion was firmly established among them, that their bodies were indeed corruptible, and that the matter of which they consisted was not stable, but that their souls were immortal, and would endure for ever, and that, proceeding from the most subtle ether, they were drawn down by a natural flux, and complicated with bodies; but that, when they are no longer detained by the bonds of the flesh, then, as if liberated from a long slavery, they will rejoice, and ascend to the celestial regions.“ Not dissimilarly Philo (in various passages, e. g. de ling. conf. Mangey I, p. 416, which reference I give at second hand) teaches that those souls which after the completion of their earthly career still feel strong incitements to inhabit evil bodies, return immediately into them; but those which are weary of vain life and regard the body as a prison or tomb, into which they allowed themselves to be enclosed only from love of knowledge, quickly rise into the Aether and dwell there. And Josephus himself seems to have entertained some kindred view, when he says (adv. Apionem, II, 24): ἡ ψυχὴ σώματι ἐμπορούμένη κακοπαθεῖ.¹⁾ Whereas, now, it seems clear from the above quotation that e. g. the Essenes did not believe in the resurrection of the body, I feel pretty sure that the Pharisees, to whom Josephus belonged since his 19th year (vide de vita sua, c. 3), did not believe in the metempsychosis, though they evidently believed in bodily resurrection for the just, a belief which certainly had never existed among the Greeks and Romans (cf. Acts XVII, 32), but which (vide what we have said in §. 50) had gained

¹⁾ On what the Kabbalists affirm about the existence of the tenet of transmigration among the Jews, gilgul haneschamoth, and their proof of its being taught in e. g. the Book of Wisdom VIII, 19, 20, vide Beer's Geschichte, Lehren und Meinungen aller bestehenden und noch bestehenden Secten der Juden, B. II, 134–138, and cf. ibid. B. I, pp. 93, 120.

considerable ground in later Judaism, though it was reserved for Christianity to render it an essential feature of orthodox faith by laying stress upon e. g. Christ's bodily appearance out of the sepulchre, his corporeal ascension into heaven, Paul's eloquent reasonings (1 Cor. XV), and, I may add, to turn it to impressive and manifold ethical account, even for express anti-suicidal purposes. — If, then, as Stäudlin in his *Geschichte der Sittenlehre Jesu* casually remarks (by the by, he translates: „God will punish the fathers, who sinned against themselves, in the children“), *Pharisaic* germs may be recognized in this same oration of Josephus, since Josephus applies the words φιλοσοφία and φιλοσοφῶν to the Pharisees as well as to the Sadducees and Essenes (*Antiq. and de bello Iud.* as above quoted), and this passage be one of such germs, we should certainly have to think of the resurrection of the body; but — the unintelligibility of the assertion still remains, nay, if that were possible, encreases.

§. 55. PHILO (in the 1st cent. p. C.).

The reader may have observed that, whenever I have had occasion to refer to this Alexandrine Jew (who has the merit of having developed and represented Judaic Hellenism most completely, consistently, and systematically, as far, at least, as consistency and system are possible in such an amalgam as his philosophy was), I have done so with that species of backwardness which at once betrayed that I had read rather about his writings than those numerous and lengthy writings themselves, which latter, indeed, I have only so far skimmed as the necessities of my present task seemed absolutely to require, and dogmatics or metaphysics evidently enact a far more significant part in his works than ethics to which latter, too, a considerable admixture of asceticism and mysticism would appear to appertain, so that even Prof. Gfrörer's elaborate treatment of Philo (in the first and second part of his *Urgeschichte des Christenthums*) could not engage my interest to any mentionable extent, and I gladly availed myself of the briefest manner at my bidding to ascertain what this Jewish Eclectic thought and taught about our special subject.

On consulting Mangey's once renowned, but now by sundry German critics, e. g. Creuzer, often castigated edition of Philo's works,

my attention was quickly rivetted by the declaration in the Index rerum thereto appended „suicidium a Judaeis astruitur“, which in its turn directed me to a somewhat circumstantial note of this editor's¹⁾ in which he refers us to *three* distinct passages which in Philo bear upon the subject of self-destruction, and on the strength of which Mangey expressly affirms „etiam Philo morem se interficiendi calculo suo comprobat.“ One of these passages, viz. that in the de legatione ad Cajum, is, however, merely narrative, and does not prove anything decisively about Philo's own views: we shall quote it Anglicé entire in a later § of this Section, when we come to speak of the practice of suicide among the Jews. But, as to the two other passages, the one in the treatise de execrationibus (ἔκτρον — ἔχοντες) certainly does seem pro-suicidal, inasmuch as Philo, whilst speaking of the curse of poverty and dearth and of people's desire to prolong their lives by any means and in any manner under accumulated and encreasing misfortunes, expresses his opinion that such persons manifestly labor under insanity, and his impression that self-destruction which many under suchlike circumstances commit, is quite the contrary of an insane procedure. The other passage (or, rather, series of passages, vide in Mangey's edition vol. II, pp. 448, 454, 459, 463) in the treatise quod omnis probus liber est is, if certainly less direct, yet, perhaps, still more decisive in conveying his conviction that suicide is not only permissible, but noble and laudable, if thereby disgrace may be avoided, or captivity escaped from, since he, when endeavoring to demonstrate the existence and character of the „wise man“, appeals not only to the Essenes and Therapeuts, but also to the Gymnosophists, admires the deed of Kalanus, reckons Empedokles, Zeno, Kleanthes (i. e. suicides) among the holy union of divine men, nay, lets the well-known wholesale suicide-tragedy of the Xanthians come in, as something magnanimous and glorious, for his sympathy and laudation. Indeed' as the very superscription and theme of this treatise remind of us of Stoicism, so the ethical spirit which therein breathes is mainly and essentially, nay, almost entirely, *Stoical*, a verdict which Zeller (in his already quoted investigation into the development of philosophy among the Greeks, vide *Ἔβ. III, zweite Hälfte*, pp. 567, 586,

¹⁾ Vol. II, p. 430 in the treatise de execrationibus. Since Mangey's edition is in most English public libraries, I need not transcribe his note.

591, 596, 642, 645, 648, 649) inclines to extend to Philo's Ethics in general.

Strange, therefore, it has seemed to me that Dähne¹⁾ should, without any heed to the above passages, have formed a diametrically opposite estimate of our Jewish Hellenist's position to suicide, i. e. should strive to demonstrate that, though suicide would apparently be deserving of recommendation according to Philo's views, he, nevertheless, consistently rejects it. „One might easily incline to surmise that, if Philo had been himself fully convinced of the truth of his own doctrine that the beholding of God is the summit of all felicity and that complete incorporeality is the unavoidable condition of attaining thereto, he must have regarded *suicide* with rather favorable eyes. And, yet this is not the case. He rejects the voluntary tearing asunder of the tie which binds man unto the body. And, taking the matter accurately, he was not in the wrong even according to his own principles.“ Since the English reader is not likely to be in possession of Dähne's work, I will subjoin in the original words his somewhat refiningly put and rather lengthy, but still in their way interesting, lucubrations on this matter. „Zwar von dem persönlichen Fortbestehen der vernünftigen Seele selbst nach dem Tode war er für jeden Fall überzeugt und es war auch kein Raum für Zweifel daran in seinem philosophischen Lehrgebäude, weshalb sich Philo auf Beweise dafür gar nicht einläßt. Die vernünftige Seele war, wie wir sahen, ihrem Wesen nach rein göttlich und mithin wesentlich eben so unvergänglich, als es das Urgöttliche selbst nur immer sein mochte. Auch hatte diese fürwahr erst zugleich mit ihrem besondern Vorhandensein nothwendig eine eigenthümliche Wesenheit erhalten, die sie auf der andern Seite eben so bestimmt von dem Urgöttlichen ausschied, das ewig ohne irgend eine Beschaffenheit zu denken war, so daß nur die menschlich-körperlosen Seelen der Verstorbenen, wenn sie in diesem Zustande blieben, als reine Geister, b. h. je nach dem Maße ihrer Reinigung als Luftgeister oder als vollkommen körperlose Seelen erscheinen mußten, die dann natürlich ungleich leichter als die Menschen bei ihren belästigenden Körpern oder sogar ihrer Natur nach und mithin ewig Gott schauten. Und alle diese Folgerungen

¹⁾ In the work I have quoted in §. 49, *ibid.* erste Abtheilung, pp. 330—333. His references and notes are much more copious than his text itself; but I shall omit them, since they have appeared to me, in some instances at least, more or less over-strained and far-fetched.

wurden auch von Philo als die seinigen anerkannt und eine in Wahrheit vollkommene (d. h. dauernde) Seligkeit erst in einem künftigen Dasein möglich gedacht. Jedoch empfahl er den Selbstmord nichtsdestoweniger keineswegs; denn das Zerreißen des physischen Bandes, welches jetzt Seele und Körper verband, würde das geistige Band, mit welchem jene an diesen gefesselt war, noch nicht zertrennen haben. Letzteres war bloß dann möglich, wenn der Geist in allen Tagen des irdischen Lebens die körperlichen Verhältnisse kennen gelernt hatte und so seine Liebe zu ihnen, die ihn in solche geführt hatte oder die sich doch in dem irdischen Leben mit Nothwendigkeit an ihn angeschlossen, durch und durch ertöbet war. Ein freiwilliges Losreißen oder ein Nachgeben an ein augenblickliches Mißbehagen über jene Verhältnisse hätte jene Geistesbildung vielleicht eben so unvollendet gelassen, als ein freiwilliger und oft geübter Umgang mit dem Sinnlichen, und die nicht aufgegebene Liebe zu dem Sinnlichen würde ihn immer wieder in ähnlicher Weise wie die Lustgeister zu neuen nothwendigen Berührungen mit der Sinnenwelt hingerrissen haben." We should, then, have here only a sort of repetition of what we found in Pythagoras and Sokrates, Plotinus and Macrobinus. But, perhaps, Mangey's and Dähne's dicta are not by any means so irreconcilable one with the other as they might at first sight appear to be, each of these writers having one-sidedly allowed his glance to be fettered to a separate set of passages. Philo, like e. g. Sokrates in the *Phaedo* and Cicero in the *somnium Scipionis*, may have disapproved of suicide for the mere mystically metaphysical purpose of escaping prematurely into ethereal beatitude, and yet, like e. g. Plotinus, have considered it lawful and rational, if employed as a means for self-deliverance from real and physical sufferings and misfortunes. Or, if the reader should prefer another mode of getting out of this difficulty, we might not unsafely say: the eclectic Jewish philosopher, like the eclectic Roman orator, was not exactly clear within himself about the matter; for the leaning upon Pythagorism and Stoicism at one and the same time could scarcely yield real unity of moral views, if we even leave Mosaism and other Orientalisms quite out of the question.

Before quitting Philo, one whim of his (vide Dähne, *zweite Abth.* p. 3, *Anm.* 4, where we are referred to p. 164 of *de eo, quod deter. pot. ins. soleat*) deserves notification as an exegetical curiosum or, speaking more accurately, an historical coup de force. Being anxious to prove that evil committed inevitably recoils upon the

actor himself, he coolly makes the Genesis (cap. IV, 8) record that Cain slew *himself*, not having hesitated to alter αὐτὸν in the passage „Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew *him*“ into εαυτὸν!!!

§. 56. TALMUDISM AND RABBINISM.

Except and beyond referring the reader to such brief special quotations as I have incidentally introduced in §. 47 from Maimonides, Nachmanides, Jarchi (and the Talmud), and also to such general annotations as I brought forward from Calmet and Grotius in §§. 10, 52, I have very little to communicate in this present §, and, unless I be much mistaken, nobody else would find aught else that could call for or deserve communication.

Josephus, when speaking of the distinctive differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees, informs us (Antiq. lib. XVIII, ubi supra) to the following effect. The Pharisees have given to the people many prescriptions from „the tradition of the elders“ (vide also Matth. XV, 2—6 and Mark VII, 3) or fathers which are not written in the laws of Moses, and which the Sadducees therefore reject, maintaining that only the written laws, not those out of the tradition of the fathers, ought to be observed. And about this matter the latter have many disputes and great contentions with the former. But, the Sadducees have only the rich on their side; the multitude follows the Pharisees. — I am not positive, whether most or many of suchlike traditions were by them really referred to Moses who is said to have received them orally on Mount Sinai, as I have also found stated; but Jewish historians inform us — here again, I presume, the dates given by them are more or less subject to criticism — that, whereas the Sadducees &c. soon after the commencement of our era became extinct, the party of the Pharisees, in the person of the great teacher or saint, Jehuda Hanasi, managed in the 2nd cent. p. C. to collect in six books what was most important of all traditions up to that time, the apophthegms and doctrines of the sages, their various opinions and judgments, and thus to ensure national authority in *written* form to what had until then been propagated only *orally* as law by instruction and tradition from teachers to pupils. These six books are called the Mischnah (doctrine?), and they in their turn gave birth, in the 4th and 5th centuries, to the Talmuds (expositions?), first to that of Jerusalem through

R. Jochanan, and then to that of Babylon through RR. Abina and Aschi, these same Talmudim being the result of the circumstance that from the 2nd to the 5th cent. the Mischnah had been taught in all the flourishing schools of the Rabbis, its contents explained, and cases not therein adduced, by argumentation deduced from it. At all events, the said Mischnah and twofold Talmud constitute the basis of modern pharisaic Judaism.

A query I put to that Rabbinical scholar whose oral communication about Maimonides I alluded to in §. 47, whether to his knowledge in the Mischnah aught anti-suicidal was contained, induced him to direct my attention to a passage I shall presently quote and which he himself considered, no doubt, in keeping with Rabbinical teaching in general, as inferentially anti-suicidal. Having been since then fortunate enough to obtain a (somewhat antiquated) German version of the whole Mischnah, I have myself read, despite the wretchedly mindless and heartless nature of much of what it contains under the name of ethical instruction and guidance, so carefully therein as to become convinced that suicide is in it not interdicted at all, but also not vindicated, i. e. in no wise specifically discussed. Much, however, of what is best in an ethical point of view stands under the names of Hillel and dozens of others in that portion in which the said passage occurs¹⁾ which in a re-translation shall here find a place as one of the choicer specimens — it is ascribed to R. Elieser Hakkappar — of suchlike logical skill and eastern magniloquence. „Those who are born, are born unto death; and those who die, are destined to become alive again. Those who live, are destined to be judged, to learn, and to proclaim, and to experience that he, God, the Maker, is the Creator, the Omniscient, the Judge, the Plaintiff, and once shall judge. Praised be he; for before Him there is no crookedness and no obliuiousness; He has no respect unto persons, and takes no bribe; for everything is His. But, know that everything is taken into account. Do not let wicked desire render thee confident that the grave will be thy asylum. Thou art formed against thy will; against thy will thou hast been born, against thy will thou livest, and against thy will thou diest; and against thy will thou wilt be obliged to give account before the judgment-seat of the king of kings, the adorable God.“

¹⁾ Aussprüche der Väter (פְּרָקֵי אֲבוֹת), Sap. IV. Tr. IV, p. 286 of Rabe's Uebersetzung.

Of course, the supposed anti-suicidal element of this passage would consist in the declaration that „man lives against his will“, i. e. though he, if in great distress or misery, should wish to die; and that „he dies against his will“, i. e. therefore, must be presumed not to die by his own deed according to his own choice of season and manner. But, what might not be proved after this fashion? Also upon words one must not lay a burden more heavy than their nature is calculated to bear. We, therefore, say that there is not here, as there certainly is in that passage of the Talmud to which allusion was made in §. 47, necessarily even an admission of the wrong of self-destruction, nor aught like a universally applicable and clear argument or statement of any kind; for it is as little true that all men die against their will (cf. §. 49) as it is true that they live against their will, and, moreover, what the generality of people *do* cannot be said to constitute exactly a law *binding* upon every person in even exceptional cases.

Among the later Rabbinical records there is one which, fondly treasured up by the Jews as a signal testimony to the true piety of Jewish women, I will not omit to mention, merely requesting the reader to compare with it sundry similar narratives which will present themselves to our more especial notice, when we are discussing the opinions of the Church Fathers on suicide from the identical noble, even if mistaken, motive. In the 10th cent. of our era, thus Jost in his abbreviated work¹⁾ relates, four rabbis, Huschiel, Mose, Schemarja and an unnamed one, whilst travelling from the East to Spain, on their voyage fell into the hands of pirates who sold them into different countries. Also the wife of Mose, who subsequently became very celebrated at Cordova, was in the vessel, and, in order to make her escape from the inevitable importunities of the pirate, ended her life by a leap into the sea, after her husband, in reply to her interrogation, had assured her of the immortality of the soul. I have little hesitation about assuming, from the tone in which this incident is related, that Rabbinism approves of suicide for the purpose at issue. And, we have Eisenmenger's positive assurance (in the already quoted work, *Æt.* II, pp. 983—986) that the mediæval Rabbis approved of those wholesale self-butcheries which were so frequent among the Jews during the persecutions in

¹⁾ Allgemeine Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes, 1832, Bd. II. p. 245.

the Middle Ages (vide the last § of this Sect.); for, in one of the Rabbinical writings the narrative of such an event is concluded with the following words. „The merit of these and suchlike *saints* shall stand before the generations of Israel wheresoever these may be. Amen.“

Coming, finally, to our own times, it has appeared to me that we may and must take for granted that *orthodox* modern Jewish Rabbis condemn suicide as unconditionally, though, perhaps, not so emphatically — for deep soulfulness and enthusiastic glow of any sort do not appertain to their Ethics in general — as the generality of modern Christian Moralists have done. Among the latter there are exceptions, as we shall learn in the next Section; but I doubt much, whether there be any among the former; for among them in general there exist apparently a stereotypeness and petrifiedness which are more or less the natural and necessary characteristics of a *dead* Religion to which a mere show of vitality is afforded by some such processes as Thomas Carlyle would, haply, style galvanic. It may be that such cases as that of e. g. Rasis would, if pointedly put as questions, still be pronounced rather jewels than flaws in the diadem of ancestral Jewish religious story; but not being aware that any system of Moral Philosophy at all has been penned in our own days by a Jew as Jew, I will take the only sort of substitute at my bidding, a Catechism designed by a Rabbi for the religious instruction of Jewish children, and make it serve us in lieu.¹⁾ Q. „Why is suicide a great sin?“ A. „Because we thereby rebel against our God, lose the opportunity of becoming constantly more perfect and of attaining to our destination, withdraw from our fellow-men what of good we might still do, and inflict great grief upon our relatives and connexions.“ Thus run Question and Answer in genuine catechetical form, nor can we object to either. Strange, however, it appeared to me that, whereas every other religious or ethical principle or precept in this same Catechism is supported by references to passages of the Old Testament, or, to sayings of the Talmudical Sages, the above argumentative reply is left both unconfirmed and unenforced by authorities of any sort. May we, then, not venture to suggest that in the said brief and dry reply, most true as far as it goes, the influence of christianity of the most commonplace kind and in its barest

1) Dr. Gagn's *Lehrbuch für den Unterricht in der israel. Religion*, 1850, p. 80.

formalism is to some extent discernible? For, in our own days in the various Christianized countries of Europe, and in Germany more especially, as two thousand years ago in Gentile Alexandria, the Jews neither do nor can remain entirely unaffected by the influences of a religious and philosophical civilization very different from, and far superior to, their own, as little as they do or can avoid acquiring and adopting living and cultivated Occidental languages beside, and even prior to, their entombed Hebrew and their Rabbinical jargon. Whilst still remaining obstinately faithful, nominally and formally at least, to the creed of their forefathers, they at the same time do not scruple, where need is, to modify and accommodate it, in a great degree at least, by and to the culture, the attainments and the speculations with which they see themselves placed in such unavoidably close contact, and the value of which in sundry respects, though utterly at variance with their own religion and literature, they, mentally acute and worldlyly interested as they are, can scarcely fail to discern, appreciate, and turn to manifold account. Here we, then, close this §, but not as yet this Chapter, since I deem it my duty as historian to introduce, after the above somewhat vague generalities, to the reader's especial notice three more or less celebrated modern Jewish philosophical thinkers who have proceeded, each independently of both Mosaism and Rabbinism, in the treatment of our question.

§. 57. SPINOZA († 1677).

It is true, Spinoza, though born and educated as Jew, had ceased to be one, ere he became, or could have become, the originator of that system of modern speculative Pantheism about the bearing of which upon our topic we shall in this § have to say some little. But, inasmuch as he never either openly or covertly belonged to the Christian community, and rather contented himself with being simply, as it were, the first disciple of his own, in a very great measure at least, self-created faith, we may most fitly, as I think, assign to his teachings a place in this Chapter. —

I can imagine this Amsterdam Israelite of ours, when boy or youth, reading in the Hebrew roll of the sacred literature of his people *yon Alpha „berischith bara Elohim haschamajim vehaarex“*, and then asking the longer the more: what and where was the begin-

ning? who and where is *God*? And, when he enquired of this same heaven and this same earth, the stars shone on in their appointed tracks, and the oceans ceased not to roll, and the winds blew and the clouds drifted, and the seasons continued to do their wise and fruitful work, as in kindness and peace, so in wrath and destruction; yet, they did not satisfactorily answer his eager question, but bid him seek for a reply in the solitude of his own mind, in the silence of his own heart. It was the problem of problems he had proposed unto himself to solve, even that problem the varied attempts at whose solution had given birth to all Religions, Philosophies, Politics, each School exclaiming its self-congratulatory *σύγγρα*, whether it guessed at every known element, separately or unitedly, or fixed upon the most abstract and vague word „the Being“, or, crowded figurative and mystical epithets upon each other unto boundless height, or, gave the oracular definition „I am that I am“, or, solemnly declared „God is a Spirit“, and each School quarrelling and warfaring with the other about its having discovered and possessed itself of the right and true solution. For my own part, I know nought of these things; for, as it seems to me, though modern science in its palmy glory can measure starry distances, and compute the earth's strata, and classify animals and plants with wondrous skill and approximate certainty, no Mortal of any clime or any age ever could or ever will tell his fellow-mortal who and what God is. Greater than the Ionians, Plato, the Neo Platonists, and Moses, to whom allusion was above made, is unquestionably Jesus, and wiser and better than their definings is his (John IV, 24), and each of us, his followers, will, if I mistake not, arrive at something like a clear comprehension and a deep consciousness of what he uttered by those mighty words in the measure in which we are or become like unto him in spiritual earnestness and practical devotedness, i. e. in which we belong to the number of those „that worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.“ Or, is it not even thus? Whatsoever is purest, wisest, noblest, holiest in the collective human soul, all its pneumatic forces and all its everlasting longings, when expanded into infinitude, united into a totality, reflected on, inferred from, would not each individual human soul fain call — God? Is not the Infinite Totality, the Personification of the Essence of thought, love, wisdom; holiness, power, O reader, thy God and mine? Do we not seek and find duty, law, happiness, religion in approaching

ever nearer and nearer resemblance unto our thus sought and thus found Personal God? Does not all true piety beckon us onwards towards such resemblance, and is not all true salvation the utmost possible realization of such resemblance?

Yet, let us not deceive ourselves. If our *hearts* have thus, as it were, *incarnated* and *personified* God unto themselves as Maker of all that is, as the universal Spirit that preserves, rules, watches over the worlds, as the great Father and Judge who by his Providence here and hereafter trains and draws in mercy and in justice through recompenses and through punishments our race unto what is wisest and noblest: it is well for us, and is enough. Our hearts have thereby satisfied their deepest longings, their sweetest hopings, their holiest aspirings, and we have learnt watchfully to brave the tempests of passion, to resign humbly and meekly the objects of our love to the grave, and heroically to snatch the poison out of the arrow of death; but — have our *minds* therefore and thereby defined the Being of God? I pray thee, thoughtful fellow-man: when the night cometh with her silence and her solitude, and we listen to the voice of our deep innermost thinking, can we really render account unto *them* of what we so readily call our „personal“ God? When we attempt it, does not a feeling of vagueness, loneliness, lostness overcome us, all sensuous limits, conditions, forms vanishing before the Infinite, and, whilst our hearts' strong love inclines and gravitates towards the One central point of Divine Personality, do not our minds in their weakness shrink, shrivel, sink, and is not this the final point: that we would believe, but cannot descry, the Spot of Light in the environing darkness? — „Grau ist alle Theorie, und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.“ These words are relevant and true here too, only — not in their Mephistophelean sense. Still truer and more relevant, however, are here Faust's words:

„wer darf sagen:
Ich glaub' an Gott?
Magst Priester oder Weise fragen,
Und ihre Antwort scheint nur Spott
Ueber den Frager zu sein
Wer darf ihn nennen?
Und wer bekennen:
Ich glaub' an ihn?
Wer empfinden
Und sich unterwinden,

Zu sagen: ich glaub' ihn nicht?
 Es sagen's aller Orten
 Alle Herzen unter dem himmlischen Tage,
 Jedes in seiner Sprache;
 Warum nicht ich in der meinen?"

Before us, then, stands a man who „said it in his own language“; and he, too, had and has a right to be heard.

If ever any one richly gifted human being since the days of e. g. Sokrates and Epiktetos, not to mention a far more sacred name, allowed his character and his thinking not only to operate one upon the other, but to become absorbed one into the other, it was Spinoza; and we may, perhaps, affirm that it lay and lies in the very nature and tenor of his peculiar system of thought more than in those of any other ancient or modern speculative system that it should emanate from and issue into the *identity* and *ideality* of action and belief, of being and thinking. But, be this as it may, none among us, howsoever ignorant he should be of Spinoza's System, and though he should never have pondered or even perused a single page of Spinoza's writings, can fail to know that his Pantheism has pretty frequently, nay, almost universally, been pronounced = Atheism in the very worst sense of this fearful term. Three things seem here to offer themselves to us as passing remarks, ere we proceed to our specific topic. Firstly. I for one have marvelously little reverence for the charge of Atheism in abstracto or in concreto, unless all the counts on which it is made, and all the grounds on which it rests, be placed clearly and fully before me; for I well know that old women of both sexes e. g. now-a-days in England occasionally call a man an Atheist, because he does not go regularly to a place of worship, or care a straw about the Rev. X. Y. Z.'s controversial and proselytizing sermons and missions, and believes Christianity to be above petty priestly squabbings of any sort. Strong words are cheap; any Dictionary supplies them to an indefinite extent; and the more people are veriest pygmies in intellect and genuine culture and mere caterers for most vulgar popularity, the more they incline to settle a system and put down a philosopher by slashing epithets of stigmatizing abuse, such as Infidel, Freethinker, Atheist, &c. Let us remember that, for instance, the French historian Beaucaire (vide Ranmer's *Geschichte Europas*, B. II, p. 200) called Hospital, the most virtuous and religious man

in France during the rule of Maria de Medici, an Atheist, and that Johann Gottlieb Fichte, personally, as it seems to me, by far the most truly earnest and noble thinker and man among all modern German philosophers, was in the first decennary of the present century deposed from his Professorship in Jena on account of his Atheism, albeit the same man soon afterwards, with *the same* „breathing thoughts“ and „burning words“ of his, became at Berlin one of the immortal moral guides and religious heralds unto Prussia and Germany, and remains so still, and, if I mistake not, ever must so remain. And, also the *man* Spinoza was verily of such sort that most of our Protestant saintly ministers of the Gospel no less than most of the canonized luminaries of the Catholic church might blush and „hide their diminished heads“, when their career is compared with, and measured by, that inflexible integrity, that retiring humility, that stainless simplicity, that heroic resignation which marked and signaled the brief, but tried, sojourn of Benedict de Spinoza on this our earth. Aye, whatever Jean Colero, yon *orthodox clergyman* who, having lived in the same house with Spinoza and having, therefore, had every opportunity of knowing everything about him, might think of his speculative system, to which he was so virulent a foe that he can discover in his very features the marks of the beast („*signum reprobationis in vultu*“), and thinks that his name ought to have been not Baruch or Benedictus, i. e. the blessed, but Maledictus, i. e. the accursed, he, this same reverend physiognomist and punster, was obliged, when he turned Spinoza's earliest biographer,¹⁾ to admit, for veracity's sake, that our Pantheist's whole character and life were a master-piece of christian morality, a well-spring of genuine edification, if judged of even by St. Paul's test (Gal. V, 22) of „the fruits of the spirit.“ It is even thus, gentle reader: deny it, zealous bigot, if thou dare. And, if thou must needs think of the Judgment *elsewhere*, I will not hesitate to suggest to thee that, perchance, many a man here branded as Atheist, will walk on, leaving many a man revered here as Theist far behind, even into the proximity and presence of the Most Holy, and, scorning the

¹⁾ Das Leben des Bened. von Spinoza aus denen Schriften dieses berühmten Welt-Weisens und dem Zeugniß vieler glaubwürdigen Personen, die ihn besonders gekannt haben, gezogen und beschrieben. Thus the title of the German version, published anno 1736, of the French original, published anno 1706, of this now somewhat rare little book. — *Lowe's* Life of Spinoza in vol. II, series I of his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, is prettily done.

world's scorn, thoughtfully blushing from humility, and pityingly forgiving his revilers, take his own appointed place in the innermost Sanctuary of the Divine! — Secondly. Nevertheless, haply, Spinoza was *theoretically* a veritable Atheist, if we analyze his teachings closely and push them to their legitimate consequences? We will listen to some little of what he himself says. In that work of his in which his thoughts on suicide are contained we read concerning God e. g. what follows.¹⁾ „Per Deum intelligo ens absolute infinitum, hoc est, substantiam constantem infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit.“ — „Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit, *necessario existit*.“ — „His Dei (thus he sums up his arguments about God as contained in the first part of his Ethics) naturam ejusque proprietatis explicui, ut, quod necessario existat; *quod sit unicus*; quod ex sola suae naturae necessitate sit et agat; quod sit omnium rerum causa libera et quomodo; quod omnia in Deo sint et ab ipso ita pendeant, ut sine ipso nec esse, nec concipi possint; et denique quod omnia a Deo fuerint praedeterminata, non quidem ex libertate voluntatis, sive absoluto beneplacito, sed ex absoluta Dei natura, sive infinita potentia.“ — „Cogitatio attributum est, sive Deus est *res cogitans*.“ — „Extensio attributum Dei est, sive Deus est *res extensa*.“ More explicit and intelligible, not to say popular, however, the following passage in one of his epistles²⁾ to his friend and correspondent Oldenburg may appear. Having admitted that he has quite a different view of God and Nature from that usually put forth by modern Christians (Neoterici Christiani), he proceeds thus. „Deum enim *rerum omnium causam immanentem*, ut ajunt, non vero transeuntem statuo. Omnia, inquam, in Deo esse et in Deo moveri cum Paulo affirmo et forte etiam cum omnibus antiquis Philosophis, licet alio modo; et aude-rem etiam dicere, cum antiquis omnibus Hebraeis, quantum ex quibusdam traditionibus, tametsi multis modis adulteratis, conjicere licet.“

Dare we, then, say that Spinoza *intended* and *willed* to banish God out of the Creation, to deny, nullify, demonstrate Him away? Scarcely so, I ween; but yet, as far as I have power to see into this matter for myself — of course, I am not going to transcribe

¹⁾ *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*, pars I, definit. VI; *ibid.* propos. XI; Appendix in initio; pars II, Propos. I et Propos. II. ²⁾ Epist. XXI.

passages from any Manual of the History of Philosophy — Spinoza's view of God is anything but identical with Christ's, and, surely, I need scarcely, after all I have said in preceding portions of this Treatise, assure the reader, if he care to know, that I infinitely prefer the latter, prefer what is said concerning God e. g. in the Sermon on the Mount (and even in some of the Psalms and Prophets) to all that Spinoza preached on this subject out of his soul's deep thoughts with would-be mathematical accuracy from the pulpit of his acute mind's temple. „Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received *a little* thereof. Then a spirit passed before my face. It stood still, but I could *not* discern the form thereof“ &c. These words of Eliphaz the Temanite (Job. IV, 12 ff.) came involuntarily into my mind, after I had been reflecting for many a long hour upon this item of Spinozism.

Nevertheless, what we usually, in the shallow and frivolous sense of the term, denominate Atheism, Spinoza can scarcely be supposed to have taught: else, how should or could such men as e. g. Schleiermacher, Novalis, Paulus, Goethe have found *deepest religion* in his system? have discovered in it something they have, each in his own manner, proclaimed to be an emanation of deepest thought, and a revelation of devoutest sublimity? Let us listen for a brief moment to some of their testimonies. The genial and profound Schleiermacher, one of the chief revivers of spiritual piety in modern Germany, one of the holiest as well as one of the most gifted theologians of the Protestant church, designates ¹⁾ him „a sainted disowned“, „a master in his art, without disciple and without citizenship“ &c. Novalis, the well-known tender-conscienced and mystically intellectual religious thinker and poet, pronounces ²⁾ him „a God-intoxicated man“, and defines his system as „an over-satiation (Ueberfättigung) with Godhead“, whereas „infidelity is a want of divine Organ and of Godhead.“ Paulus, the almost all-sided scholar and critically rationalistic interpreter of the biblical documents, says (as quoted in the already mentioned work by Reichlin-Meldegg, B. I, p. 227). „In his Ethics and Letters the man appears as one of those with whom I should wish to be able to live, were it even only listening with Pythagorean silence and admiring to the fullness of their mind and heart.“

¹⁾ Anmerkungen, pp. 68 und 69, to his *Reden über die Religion*. ²⁾ Fragmente, Th. I, p. 193 of his *Schriften* by L. Tieck and F. Schlegel, edit 4.

Goethe, finally, though not exactly, as I take it, by any means a devout man, yet at all events, doubtless, a most discerning one, says.¹⁾ „Spinoza does not demonstrate the existence of God; existence is God, and, if others abuse him on that account as *Atheum*, I would fain call and extol him as *theissimum* and *christianissimum*.“

Thirdly, and lastly. Hostility or ignorance have not failed to scent and trace likewise a sort of *practical* Atheism in other elements of Spinoza's teachings, e. g. in his tenets about Divine Determinism in reference to all human action, about individual advantage and general utility as the end and aim of all right doing, and — to approach nearer to our immediate topic — about self-preservation as the universal formula of what is ethical, as identical with virtue and religion. Are also these things heresies, fallacies, or not, perhaps, rather nobly meant and most thoughtful principles which, interpreted and qualified as he himself has interpreted and qualified them in his multifarious replies to the queries of his correspondents and the objections of his antagonists, are really calculated to engender aught but indifference, selfishness, immorality? Schleiermacher, in one of his most acute and abstruse works, lauds the significance and consistency of Spinoza's view of self-preservation just in regard to suicide,²⁾ whilst Stäudlin (as quoted in §. 49, *ibid.* p. 162 *Ann.*) makes a point of denying to Spinoza's anti-suicidal utterances all and every genuine value and force. Suchlike controversial Ayes and Noes, which it was our duty historically to mention, though not exactly our task critically to argue, are not unnatural attendants upon even the practical deductions and fixations of any bold and original moral philosophy which says unto Gospels and Epistles: I know better than ye. But I, for my own humble part, still belong to those who, content to „see only darkly“, look rather towards Jerusalem than towards Amsterdam for an answer to all questions on puzzling life's simplest duties also.

It is, however, high time that we should let Spinoza speak for himself on our especial theme. He does so in his above-mentioned *posthumous* work, the *Ethics*, on sundry occasions.³⁾ The first hint he gives (*pars* II, *proposit.* 49, *schol.*) is manifestly to the effect

¹⁾ Vide *Wölfe's Leben von J. W. Schäfer*, 1851, B. I, p. 365. ²⁾ *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre*, 1803, pp. 266, 270. ³⁾ Vide his *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, edid. H. E. G. Paulus, 1802 and 1803, vol. II, pp. 126, 215, 216, 218.

that he would be at a loss to say, whether or not a suicide could be accounted a rational being at all. „If one ask me, whether such a person must not be considered rather as an ass than as a human being, I reply that I do not know, as I likewise do not know how high he is to be estimated who *hangs himself* (quanti aestimandus sit ille, qui se pensilem facit), or how high children, fools, madmen and suchlike more are to be estimated.“ The second hint (pars IV, propos. 18, schol.), whilst greatest possible stress is laid upon the duty of self-preservation as including all other duties, as being the primary ethical sine qua non and all-absorbing principle of duty, leads us to something similar, viz. the assumption of mental impotence as the cause of suicide. „Inasmuch as Reason does not demand anything against Nature, it consequently itself demands that everybody should love himself, that he should seek his advantage, that which is veritably useful to him, that he should endeavor after everything that conducts man really to greater perfection, and in general that everybody should strive to preserve his Being as far as it lies within his power. This is as necessarily true as that the whole is larger than its part. Inasmuch as, furthermore, Virtue is nothing but acting according to the laws of one's own nature, and everybody strives to preserve his Being only according to the laws of his own nature, these things follow therefrom. Firstly, that the basis of virtue is just the endeavor to preserve one's own Being, and that happiness consists in man's ability to preserve his Being. Secondly, that Virtue is to be desired for its own sake, and that there is nothing that is more excellent or more useful than it for whose sake it ought to be desired. Finally, that *suicides are mentally impotent, and entirely vanquished by external causes which are antagonistic to their nature*“ (eos, qui se interficiunt, animo esse impotentes, eosque a causis externis, suae naturae repugnantibus, prorsus vinci). The third hint (ibid. propos. 20, schol.) is little more than a development of what has been conveyed by the last passage, viz. that suicide is, according to Spinoza's conviction, a species of unnaturalness, insanity, mental hallucination. „Consequently, nobody omits, if he be not vanquished by external causes and such as are contrary to his nature, to desire that which is useful to him, or to preserve his Being (suum Esse preservare). Nobody, I say, avoids eating or *kills himself* (se ipsum interficit) according to the necessity of his nature, but compelled by external causes. This may happen

in many ways: one person kills himself compelled by another who twists his right hand round, in which he accidentally holds a sword, and compels him to turn its point against his own breast; another person is compelled by the command of a tyrant to open his veins, like Seneca, i. e. he will evade a greater evil by a minor one; or, finally, if unknown external causes so dispose his conceptions and affect his body that the latter assumes a different nature which is opposed to the former one, and of which different nature there can be no idea in the mind. But, that a human being according to the necessity of his nature should strive not to exist, or to become changed into another form, is as impossible as that something should come out of nothing, which fact everybody can perceive by dint of even slight reflection." Also in one of his epistles (XXXVI) there occurs the following somewhat peculiar passage: „if anybody were to ask: supposing it to agree better with anybody's nature, were he to hang himself (*ut seipsum suspenderet*), would there exist reasons, why he should not hang himself? Supposing it possible that such a nature existed, I then affirm (whether I admit, or do not admit, free will) that, if anybody sees that he can live more comfortably on the gallows than if he sits at his table, he would act quite stupidly, if he does not hang himself, and that he who should see clearly that he by the commission of a crime can in verity enjoy a more perfect and better life or more essentiality (*essentia*) than by the pursuit of virtue, would likewise be stupid, if he did not commit it." I will, finally, add, by way of further general elucidation of Spinoza's principles touching our subject his brief definitions of the duty of self-preservation (*pars IV, proposit. 24*) and of the nature of fortitude or strength of soul (*pars III, propos. 59, schol.*). „*Ex virtute absolute agere nihil aliud in nobis est, quam ex ductu rationis agere, vivere, suum Esse conservare (haec tria idem significant) ex fundamento proprium utile quaerendi.*" — „*Per Animositatem intelligo Cupiditatem, qua unusquisque conatur suum Esse ex solo rationis dictamine conservare.*"

§. 58. MENDELSSOHN († 1786).

What Moses Maimon had been in the eyes of the Spanish Jews in the 12th century, Moses Mendel (who, by the by, was almost the bitterest antagonist of his day to Spinozism) became to the German

Jews in the 18th century, with, however, all such difference as the six intervening centuries and the respective countries naturally produced; nay, a Jewish writer (Willstätter, *ubi supra*, p. 186) has not hesitated, with genuine oriental magniloquence and equally genuine Israelitish vanity or servility, to liken him unto yon greatest of their leaders, and say of him that he „like a second Moses redeemed his brethren in the faith out of the bondage of superannuated prejudices and broke the fetters with which superstition held them bound.“ At all events, his attainments, abilities and virtues were such as to render him extremely influential in enlightening and raising the Jews in Germany, and to secure to him a dignified and prominent position in the German Republic of Letters. But, a brief panegyrical (only too panegyrical, perhaps; for genuine highest nobleness in his character seems to me a somewhat questionable matter) sketch of his life having somewhat recently been published by a Jew in English,¹⁾ I will take a general knowledge of him for granted, and merely lay stress upon one point that more immediately interests us in connexion with our present enquiry. He stanchly remained in spite of his manifest and marked metaphysical tendencies and his many christian literary and friendly connexions, an orthodox Jew! This fact has always appeared to me the great peculiarity about him, though I can perfectly well understand, and fully sympathize with, his manfully rebutting with undisguised displeasure the efforts of well-meaning, but indiscreet, zealots, e. g. Lavater, to convert him to dogmatic orthodox christianity;²⁾ and, of course, I cannot but applaud his not allowing any temporal social advantages to bias and mislead him to abjure the faith of his fathers with such levity and from such self-interest as have, in Germany as in England, since his time induced but too many Jews to become converts to Christianity *externally*, remaining, however, to all intents and purposes, if we would but look at their characters and careers dispassionately, *internally* still Jews, often even in the very worst sense of this very significant word.

Mendelssohn has in more than one of his writings approached and discussed the question of suicide, not, however, in the spirit or with the weapons of a Rabbinically trained and prejudiced Hebrew,

¹⁾ Samuel's Memoir of Moses Mendelssohn, vide especially pp. 48—67 of edit. 2. ²⁾ I may here in passing draw the reader's attention to Spinoza's noble and thoughtful letter to Albert Burgh (epist. 74), after the latter had conjured him to turn Catholic.

but, rather, as a self-thinking and an independent Philosopher of the age and land in which he lived and wrote. He did not even make any explicit theological belief in Revelation the standing-point or ground-work of his argumentation; he, rather, allowed our topic to present itself to him as „eine knotige Materie“, as „eine verjährt Streitfrage“; and preferring, it would seem, to start from, and return to, simply a more or less pagan belief in God and Immortality, he took considerable pains to untie the knot, and settle the question. I have already in §. 3 quoted a passage from his *Briefe über die Empfindungen* (letters on the Sensations); and with these, which have appeared to me, speaking quite generally, characterized by a sort of Jewish acuteness and by considerable dexterity of diction rather than by geniality or devoutness, we will commence. In four of them,¹⁾ two friends, Euphranor, a German youth, and Theokles, an Englishman, correspond with each other on the permissibility or non-permissibility of suicide; and also other fictitious persons, Lindamour (this is, vide Sect. V, the assumed name under which Charles Gildon wrote his defence of the suicide of his friend Blount) and Eudox, an Englishman, are introduced into these epistles, their opinions being stated and their arguments analysed. In letter IX — it is from Euphranor to Theokles — the former recounts how Lindamour had undertaken to defend the suicide of Blount and suicide per se in a very elaborate and specious manner, and in what degree he himself had been shaken by Lindamour's arguments in his previous convictions of the unlawfulness of suicide. In letter XIII, which is Theokles' reply, he tests and repels Lindamour's reasonings, in spite of the fact that his own countryman Eudox agrees with them. In letter XIV, again from Theokles to Euphranor, the former narrates how he had worsted Eudox who had undertaken to defend Lindamour's defence of suicide. Letter XV, finally, from the same to the same, reports Theokles' ultimate argumentative triumph over Eudox. — Doubtless, this pro and con writing and conversing between the four parties is somewhat disturbing and confusing; yet, we can scarcely err, if we take Theokles for the exponent of Mendelssohn's own views, in which case our impression would needs be that this Jewish philosopher intended to argue warmly and strongly

¹⁾ Briefe IX, XIII, XVI, XV, *vermischte philosophische Schriften*, 1780, pp. 64—89. The first edition appeared already 1761.

both against the permissibility of suicide, supposing the soul to be immortal, and against the rationality of suicide, supposing the soul not to be immortal. Theokles' words at the conclusion of his last epistle are these. „Die Schlüsse wider den Selbstmord, wendet man ein, stützen sich auf weit hergesuchte Wahrheiten. Wohl! Worauf beruhen aber die Bewegungsgründe, die uns zum Selbstmord antreiben? Welche nichtswürdige Kleinigkeiten! Es ist billig, daß sich eine Kleinigkeit um Kleinigkeiten bekümmere.“ — Appended to these four letters are sundry long and short illustrative and controversial notes by Mendelssohn himself which the reader may safely be left to look over for himself, if the subject so far interest him as to render it worth his while to do so. In our capacity of historian, however, we will add the little that now follows. Reinhard (on p. 82 of the diss. quoted in §. 3) is of opinion that Mendelssohn's anti-suicidal arguments are based upon the false principle of prudence, not upon the principle of virtue, and have in view only man's position unto himself, instead of his relation to God, and thence not only prove too little, but might fairly be turned to pro-suicidal account: „nihil enim efficit Mendelssohn, nisi hoc, *parum prudenter agere, qui sibi vim faciant.*“ Perhaps, however, this judgment is unnecessarily severe; yet, there seems to me to be some truth and justice in it, and I should feel disposed to say that in Mendelssohn's argumentation the, if I may thus express myself, *calculating* Jewish intellect predominates over the more genial christian objections, and that, perhaps, as a totality it is rather clear and well-meant than profound in the genuine sense of this latter term. By the by, the word I have just used, viz. calculating, reminds me that Mendelssohn has, among other things, recourse to an algebraic formula: Good in Life is = a positive quantity, Evil in Life = a negative quantity, and Death = Zero; a comparison which, whilst it induced the well-known meritorious Abbt to decide against suicide on moral and social grounds, extorted from the catholic moralist Danzer ¹⁾ the verdict that it was absolute nonsense. Confessing my utter non-possession of the mathematical plummet for sounding suchlike depths, if depths they be, I will merely hint as a general maxim that almost any and every analogy borrowed from the mathematical and physical sciences goes at best but a very little way towards unveiling and elucidating the

¹⁾ Anleitung zur christlichen Moral, B. III, 1787—1791, pp. 242—246.

moral nature and duty of man in their double relation to Life and Death, and often only eludes and obscures the questionable point, more especially, if the latter should chance to be of a character so complex and intricate as the one now before us unquestionably is. Lindamour's argument runs about thus. If in the mixture of good and evil after duly balancing calculation a positive quantity remain, such a state is more desirable than death; if nothing remain on either side, it is equal to zero; if a negative quantity remain, why should one refuse to prefer zero unto it? Abbt's notes and Mendelssohn's notes on these notes together form note 15 in the 2nd edit. G. W. Block's strictures on the entire treatment of our question in these same Letters on the Sensations are known to me only from a critique on his anti-suicidal monograph, which appeared 1792, in the *Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, B. I, pp. 486—493.

We now, in conclusion, proceed to a clearer and more satisfactory, because a more coherent and decisive, though, perhaps, a less original and piquant, treatment of our subject by Mendelssohn. I allude to his *Phädon, oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, an imitation or, rather, a reproduction of Plato's same-named Dialogue. It appeared later, viz. in the year 1767. Here, following in the footsteps of his Pagan model, our Israelitish metaphysician re-argues also this question, and argues down the permissibility of suicide in so profound and beautiful a manner that I cannot deny the christian reader the pleasure and advantage of perusing the relevant passages,¹⁾ though they will take up a somewhat disproportionately large space in our Treatise. I will transcribe them in their original form, since I, perhaps, by translation might not do justice to the stylistic elegance of this work which is generally pronounced our philosopher's most matured and most finished production. Er (Venus) wird zwar nicht selbst Hand an sich legen; denn dieses ist unerlaubt, wie einem jeden bekannt ist. Ich behaupte, daß der Selbstmord schlechterdings in allen möglichen Umständen unerlaubt sei. Wir wissen, es giebt Leute, für welche es besser wäre, gestorben zu sein, als zu leben. Nun dürfte es dich befremden, daß die Heiligkeit der Sitten auch von diesen Unglücklichen fordern sollte, sich nicht selbst wohl zu thun, sondern eine andere wohlthätige Hand abzuwarten. Gott ist unser Eigenthumsherr, wir sind sein Eigenthum, und seine Vorsehung besorgt unser Bestes. Ein

¹⁾ *Sämmtliche Werke in Einem Bande*, 1838, pp. 33—35.

Leibeigener, ¹⁾ der unter der Vorsorge eines gütigen Herrn steht, handelt sträflich, wenn er sich den Absichten desselben widersetzt. — Vielmehr, wenn ein Funke von Rechtschaffenheit in seinem Busen glimmt, muß es ihm eine wahre Freude sein, die Wünsche seines Gebieters durch sich erfüllt zu sehen; und um so mehr, wenn er von der Gesinnung seines Herrn überzeugt ist, daß sein Bestes an diesen Wünschen Theil hat. Als der unerschaffene Werkmeister den künstlichen Bau des menschlichen Leibes wirkte, und ein vernünftiges Wesen hineinsetzte, hatte er da böse oder gute Absichten? Denn er mußte sein Wesen, das selbstständige Gute, verläugnen, wenn er mit seinem Thun und Lassen böse Absichten verknüpfen könnte; und was ist ein Gott, der sein Wesen verläugnen kann? ... Derselbe Gott, der den Leib gebaut, hat ihn auch mit Kräften ausgerüstet, die ihn stärken, erhalten und vor allzu frühem Untergange bewahren. Wollen wir nicht auch diesen Erhaltungskräften höchst gütige Absichten zum Ziele setzen? Als treugefinten Leibeigenen also muß es uns eine heilige Pflicht sein, die Absichten unsers Eigenthumsherrn zu ihrer Reife geheißen zu lassen, sie nicht gewaltsamer Weise in ihrem Laufe zu hemmen, sondern vielmehr alle unsere freiwilligen Handlungen mit denselben auf das vollkommenste übereinstimmen zu lassen. Darum habe ich gesagt, daß die Weltweisheit die vortrefflichste Musik sei; denn sie lehrt uns, unsere Gedanken und Handlungen so einzurichten, daß sie, so viel uns möglich ist, mit den Absichten des allerhöchsten Eigenthumsherrn vollkommen übereinstimmen. Ist nun die Musik eine Wissenschaft, das Schwache mit dem Starken, das Rauhe mit dem Sanften, und das Unangenehme mit dem Angenehmen in eine Harmonie zu bringen: so kann gewiß keine Musik herrlicher und vortrefflicher sein, als die Weltweisheit, die uns lehrt, nicht nur unsere Gedanken und Handlungen unter sich, sondern auch die Handlungen des Endlichen mit den Absichten des Unendlichen, und die Gedanken des Erdbewohners mit den Gedanken des Allwissenden in eine große und wundervolle Harmonie zu stimmen. — O Gebes! und der verwegene Sterbliche sollte sich erdreisten, diese entzückende Harmonie zu zerstören? Sind die Kräfte der Natur nicht Diener der Gottheit, die ihre Befehle vollstrecken? Sie sind also

¹⁾ We see that he, *unlike* most German writers, e. g. besides those mentioned in §. 23, also Meiners (*Geschichte der Wissenschaften*, B II, p. 775), Köhler, Teuffel, and also Davisius (to Max. Tyrius) and Rousseau (in his *Héloïse*), adopts the image of bondsman, not the Ciceronian simile of soldier. Indeed, since slaves were, as it were, captives, this acceptation harmonizes well with what is said in the *Phaedo* about the „bonds of the body“; whereas slaves were not used as soldiers in ancient Greece, or soldiers regarded as slaves.

auch Wahrsager, die uns den Willen und die Absichten der Gottheit weit richtiger verkündigen, als die Eingeweide der Schlachtopfer; denn das ist unstreitig ein Rathschluß des Allerhöchsten, wohin die von ihm erschaffenen Kräfte abzielen? So lange uns also diese Wahrsager andeuten, daß die Erhaltung unseres Lebens zu den Absichten Gottes gehöre, sind wir verpflichtet, unsere freien Handlungen denselben gemäß einzurichten, und haben weder Fug noch Recht, den Erhaltungskräften unserer Natur Gewalt entgegenzusetzen, und die Diener der obersten Weisheit in ihrer Verrichtung zu stören. Diese Schuldigkeit liegt uns so lange ob, bis Gott uns durch eben dieselben Wahrsager den ausdrücklichen Befehl zuschickt, dieses Leben zu verlassen, so wie er ihn heute mir zuschickt hat.

On which lengthy interesting extracts I have, in an historical point of view, nothing to say, except a few explanatory words which Prof. Ch. A. Brandis makes in his „Introduction to Mendelssohn's philosophical writings“, and which runs thus.¹⁾ „Also in the argumentation on the immorality of suicide the modern Phaedon might adhere closely to the Platonic one, and only with reference to (Mendelssohn's own) Letters on the Sensations render more definitely prominent, how the consciousness of entire dependence on the Divinity must attest itself in the resolve to preserve the life granted to us by it, until we should be called away out of it by that Divinity's soothsayers, i. e. the powers of nature and moral demands.“

§. 59. RAHEL LEVIN († 1833).

I shall not enter into particulars about either the character or the writings of this gifted and celebrated Berlin lady whose widower, the well-known extremely clever German writer, Varnhagen von Ense, still survives, since the English reader, if he will open Thomas Carlyle's Critical and Miscellaneous Essays²⁾ and the Quarterly Review for 1843, as quoted already in §. 8, can find pretty ample information concerning her. Let it suffice to state briefly what follows. From her husband's biographical sketch of her, which is prefixed to the book we shall presently have to speak of, more especially *ibid.* p. 43, it is clear that, as she was born of Jewish parents and brought

¹⁾ *Ibid.* p. 87, as appended to vol. I of G. B. Mendelssohn's edition, 1843, of his relative's collective writings, to which a biography is prefixed. ²⁾ Vol. V, pp. 338—352.

up as Jewess, she never became either in conviction or sentiment a Christian in the technical and rigorous sense of this term, though she, doubtless, likewise during a lengthened period before her death had ceased to think, feel, write like a Jewess, if, indeed, she ever had been by faith Jewishly orthodox; for, whoever knows even only some little about modern Berlin Judaism, must be aware that the higher classes of the Israelites in the Prussian capital during the last few decennaries have not been in the habit of attaching unconditional value to the faith of Abraham, because they chanced to be of the seed of Abraham. We, therefore, without giving ourselves much trouble to analyse Rahel Levin's creed, take the liberty of regarding her as a prominent literary organ of modern soi-disant enlightened Judaism which is often, if I may use a very homely slang phrase, „neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.“

Among her numerous correspondents, admirers, and platonic lovers, we find mention made of a certain Alexander von der Marwitz, a young nobleman of manifestly great abilities, attainments, aspirations and virtues who met with his death anno 1813 on the battle-field of Montmirail in the German wars against Bonaparte.¹⁾ Partly, his passion for Rahel, and, partly, his eagerness, not unlike that of Heinrich Stieglitz (vide §. 8) in his youth, to know, to be, to do more than it was in his power to accomplish, would appear to have rendered him discontented, melancholy, despondent, hypochondriacal. Thence, we hear him alluding to his contemplation of suicide, but yet his shrinking from the commission of it. In one of his epistles to Rahel, written previously to that famous one of hers to him which has induced us to devote to her this present §, he says:²⁾ „Perish I *can*, but live as a nuisance (Ekel) to myself, as a burthen to others, or end in an indecorous, vulgarly cruel manner, that I *can* not, and this is yet still very fortunate. I have at the present period sometimes thought of suicide, and it has always appeared to me a wicked barbarity (verrückte Rohheit) to destroy so bloodily, so deliberately the sacred vessel. Also it, i. e. this same wicked barbarity, may become unavoidable by over-measure of distress, this I indeed feel. Strange state. Whilst I am writing this, it becomes clear to me, how in every not vulgar (gemeyn) nature

¹⁾ Gallerie von Bildnissen aus Rahel's Umgang und Briefwechsel, herausgegeben von Barshagen von Ense, 1836, Ab. II. p. 17. ²⁾ Ibid. p. 40, and in the book I shall presently quote, B. I, p. 519.

the body must follow, as soon as the soul has died, and how it, viz. the body, is just thereby desecrated, and how it is only a piece of good fortune of these times that other, externally more decorous, ways stand open which divert us from the usual cruel one." Evidently, he hereby alludes to dying as a soldier. In a seven days' earlier letter (2 Juni, 1811) there occurs the following passage (ib. p. 38). „Glend leben will und kann ich nicht, der Augenblick, in dem Herzensfülle und Geisteslebendigkeit mich für immer verlassen, ist für mich der, où la vie est un opprobre et la mort un devoir." I have stated these few particulars about Marwitz himself, to whom Rabel's epistle is addressed, because the said epistle becomes a still heavier crime, if crime it be, because of the mood, situation, and principles of the youthful friend and passionate admirer for whose instruction and edification it was penned. We know (vide §. 10) that in the same year Heinrich von Kleist and his female friend met with a suicidal end; and in the same year, on the day before Christmas day, Rabel wrote the following lengthy apology for, or defence of, suicide.¹⁾ I will communicate it in the original, the style of which is so jargonish or piquant and abrupt as even to become occasionally a little obscure. „Gestern aber hätte ich Ihnen doch geschrieben, wenn mich nicht Heinrich Kleist's Tod so sehr eingenommen hätte. Es läßt sich, wo das Leben aus ist, niemals etwas darüber sagen; von Kleist befremdete mich die That nicht; es ging streng in ihm her, er war wahrhaft, und litt viel. Wir²⁾ haben nie über Tod und Selbstmord gesprochen. — Sie wissen wie ich über Mord an uns selbst denke: wie Sie! Ich mag es nicht, daß die Unglückseligen, die Menschen, bis auf die Hefen leiden. Dem wahrhaft Großen, Unendlichen, wenn man es konzipirt — kann man sich auf allen Wegen nähern; begreifen können wir keinen; wir müssen hoffen auf die göttliche Güte; und die sollte grade nach einem Pistolenschuß ihr Ende erreicht haben? — Unglück aller Art dürfte mich berühren? Jedem elenden Fieber, jedem Kloss, jedem Dachstein, jeder Ungeschicklichkeit sollte es erlaubt sein, nur mir nicht? Siechen auf Krankheits- und Unglückslagern sollt' ich müssen, und wenn es hoch und schön kommt, zu achtzig Jahren ein glücklicher imbécille werden, und von dreißig an schon mich etelhaft

¹⁾ Rabel. Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde, 1834, B. I, pp. 576, 577.

²⁾ This wir refers, I presume, to Kleist, not to Marwitz: otherwise the statement in the next sentence would be difficult to account for: which statement, at all events, remains somewhat untrue; for their opinions touching suicide were evidently not quite the same.

deterioriren? Ich freue mich, daß mein edler Freund — denn Freund ruf' ich ihm bitter und mit Thränen nach — das Unwürdige nicht duldet: gelitten hat er genug. — Keiner von denen, die ihn etwa tadeln, hätte ihm zehn Thaler gereicht; Nächte gewidmet, Nachsicht mit ihm gehabt, hätt' er sich ihm nur zerstört zeigen können. Den ewigen Kalkül hätten sie nie unterbrochen, ob er wohl Recht, ob er wohl nicht Recht zu dieser Tasse Kaffee habe! Ich weiß von seinem Tod nichts, als daß er eine Frau, und dann sich erschossen hat. Es ist und bleibt ein Muth. Wer verlasse nicht das abgetragene incorrigible Leben, wenn er die dunklen Möglichkeiten nicht noch mehr fürchtete; und lösen vom Wünschenswerthen, das thut der Weltgang schon. Dies von denen, die sich nichts zu erfreuen haben; forsche ein jeder selbst, ob es Viele oder Wenige sind."

This letter,¹⁾ as far as private circulation may have rendered its contents more or less publicly known, — I am not aware that it was actually published before the year 1834 —, would appear to have given considerable offence in sundry quarters, as indeed it well might. Poor Charlotte Stieglitz (on p. 166 of the *Denkmal* quoted in §. 8) records thus of it. „Unge Seelen hängen sich an den einen Brief, in welchem sie (Rahel) den Selbstmord vertheidigt, und sind fromm außer sich darüber.“ That Charlotte herself, however, did not view its contents either with indignation, disapprobation, or even surprise, is manifest from the above few words of hers. The English reviewer in the *Quarterly*²⁾ expresses himself as „shocked at the awful impiety of this letter“, whereat we cannot wonder; but, when he affirms that, after many years, Rahel's words returned to her „stained with the blood of Charlotte,“ this assumption of his is gratuitous and unwarrantably indelicate; for, on the one hand, Charlotte Stieglitz was not so weak as to be made a suicide by one of Rahel's epistles; and, on the other hand, her death was, as we saw in §. 8, essentially different from that of Kleist's in more respect than one. That Carlyle (ubi supra) has allowed, when discussing the book under mention, the above epistle to pass without either reproof or notice, somewhat astonishes me.

However, to return for one brief moment to Kleist's peculiar

¹⁾ Vide also *ibid.* p. 515, where she speaks very lightly of suicide, and we may remind ourselves of one of her aphorisms which is to the effect that „a ready-packed carriage, or a dagger, every one should have at hand, that, when he feels inclined, he may instantly depart.“ ²⁾ Vol. 73, pp. 160, 161.

case, I will state some few literary particulars in addition to those which found a place already in §. 10. Whilst, on the one hand, this very event was in part the immediate cause of Mme. de Staël's composing her celebrated anti-suicidal réflexions sur le suicide, and whilst the Jewess Rahel contented herself with simply a cool vindication of his deed, sadly strange *glorifications* of it were attempted at the time, and have not very long ago been really accomplished. For instance, a certain judicial functionary, Pequilhaen by name, in conjunction with the husband of the deceased lady, actually got a notice printed in one of the Berlin Newspapers of that day to the effect that he intended to publish a sort of complete defence and partial apotheosis of the said deed, and to devote the proceeds of the sale of his pamphlet or book to some public charitable Institution; but the late King of Prussia wisely interfered to stifle the projected nefarious publication in its birth. — And, again, Eduard von Bülow, not content with leaving the unhappy and erring couple quietly beneath yon two hillocks of sand where they had been interred at ten o' clock at night side by side in two separate coffins, fir-twigs being scattered over their lonely graves; must needs give himself much trouble, very many years afterwards, to convert their final resting-place on the banks of the Wansee by means of flowers, trees, railing and a granite-pillar into a shrine of poetically devotional pilgrimage for the youths and maidens of the Prussian Capital!

CHAPTER IV. RITES AND PRACTICES.

§. 60. VESTIGES OF LAWS.

The case of Samson cannot be here made use of for reasons which must suggest themselves to everybody at once. Nor will I lay much stress upon that of Saul, not, however, because one narrative lets him cause himself to be slain, since this circumstance would not in any wise materially alter or affect the case, but — because he was a *King*, which clause will alas! receive its full elucidation, when we come to discuss Christian legislation. I may, likewise, incidentally remark that the mode of treating his corpse was more or less peculiar. Whereas, namely, the ancient Jews generally interred their dead, as well in earliest as in latest times, Saul's corpse was burnt (1 Sam. XXXI, 12, 13). The probable or possible reason was, I presume, a desire to prevent the enemy from digging up and dishonoring his remains. But, Achitophel's case is decisive, not only *ritually*, but also *fiscally*. Since he was buried in the tomb of his fathers, suicide was not, in his time, ritually punished; for the unmistakeable tenor of this phrase is = to receive an honorable interment. And, since he made his Will, it was just as little *fiscally* punished; for the Hebrew וַיַּעֲרֵךְ אֶת-בֵּיתוֹ, he arranged for his house (LXX. καὶ ἐστέρλωτο τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ; Vulg. disposita domo sua), Jewish and Christian commentators, e. g. Herzheimer and Fleetwood (ubi supra), are unanimous in interpreting as I have done. But, he who can make a Will does not lose the right of disposing of his goods and chattels, i. e. his Will remains valid. By the by, the same verb occurs in Isaiah XXXVIII, 1, where the prophet is bid to say to the dying Heseekiah צִוּ לְבֵיתְךָ (LXX. τάξαι πρὸς τοῦ οἴκου σου; Vulg. dispone domui tuae), set thine house in order. In

other words, therefore, suicide was not treated as a crime, because — this inference we deem ourselves justified in drawing — it was not regarded as one; for, on the one hand, if any conceivable suicide deserved to be, and was likely to have been, dealt with according to the utmost rigor of the law, Achitophel was, doubtless, such a one, not only because his self-slaughter was perfectly deliberate, but also because he was otherwise an ungodly man; and, on the other hand, had there been even the slightest mark of ignominy attendant upon the disposal of either his corpse or his estate, the historian, who cannot be supposed in any measure or manner favorable to a person at once so daring and so disloyal, would surely not have omitted to make some allusion to it.

This much from the canonical writings of the O. T. And, since the record of the burial of Rhazis is identical with that of the burial of Achitophel, the apocryphal writings of the O. T. equally at a much later period ignore the existence of any ritual visitation upon the slayer of himself.

Nevertheless, the Jewish historian Josephus says, in that oration of his which we analysed in §. 54, what follows. „For which reason God hates such doings, and the crime is punished by the most wise legislator. Accordingly, our laws determine that the bodies of such as kill themselves should be exposed till the sun have set, without burial, although at the same time it be allowed by them to be lawful to bury our enemies“, i. e. sooner. But this passage also, like sundry others in the identical harangue as we learnt in the course of our comments thereon in §. 54, seems replete with difficulties which we must honestly mention, though we should see ourselves unable to offer any aid towards removing them; for we are only in search of historical facts: ingenious conceits of any sort cannot serve our purpose.

1. Whom does Josephus mean by ὁ σοφώτατος νομοθέτης? I myself should incline to fix at once upon *Moses*, since this appears to me the most natural supposition. But, as everybody knows, no such law occurs in the Mosaic legislature; nay, we on the contrary expressly read in Deuteronomy,¹⁾ which book the Jews consider a genuine Mosaic production, though various christian critics assign a far later origin to it, the distinct and emphatic commandment that,

¹⁾ Chapt. XXI, 22, 23.

in order „that the land be not defiled“, even a person capitally punished, nay, even one hanged, i. e. „accursed of God“, shall be in some manner buried that very day, consequently, *before sunset*. Indeed, speaking quite in general, the ancient Jews invariably hastened to bury their dead,¹⁾ partly, because of the heat of the climate which caused putrefaction to show itself quickly, and, partly, because the corpse was conceived as *se per unclean*. One strange exception to this rule may be found;²⁾ we may draw attention to it, but shall not attempt to account for it. — Michaelis, therefore, does not hesitate to suggest in his often quoted *Μοσαϊσμός Νεχτ* that *God* is meant by „the wisest lawgiver“; but he does not develop this hypothesis of his; and, if I mistake not, equal, or still greater, obstacles lie in the way of this interpretation. a. Josephus, as it seems to me, expressly distinguishes between God as *hater* and the most wise legislator as *punisher* of the suicide: διὰ τοῦτο μὲν-σῆται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ τοῦτο καὶ παρὰ τῷ σοφωτάτῳ κολάζεται νομοθέτῃ. b. No such or similar law is to be found in the *entire canon* of the Old Testament; and I am not aware that we should be justified in assuming that either Josephus himself or his auditors believed God to have Himself legislated for them, the Hebrews, immediately *elsewhere*. c. Michaelis himself paraphrases the παρ' ἡμῶν ἔκριναν by „nach einem Rechtspruch der Rabbinen, oder nach einem Befehl der Obrigkeit“, so that, according to him, in the time of Josephus the decrees of the Rabbis, the Magistracy, the Synedrium, or whatsoever else, were ascribed directly to Jehovah. But, the Rabbis &c., supposing them not rather only the *expositors* of the law than the *makers* of laws, were, I ween, scarcely believed and proclaimed to be identical with God, so that they and Jehovah were interchangeable terms!

2. But, whensoever such decrees may have originated: when did they come into, or, when were they ever in, operation? We have seen that the law under mention existed neither so early as the days of Achitophel nor so late as those of Rhazis; nor would they appear to have been acted upon in any individual instance in those of Josephus himself; for (*vide* the next §), though this historian narrates numberless examples of suicide among his own people in his own age, he, yet, never by any accident makes even the

¹⁾ Cf. Joshua VIII, 29; X, 26, 27. ²⁾ 2 Sam. XXI, 6, 9, 10.

slightest allusion to any kind or degree of ignominy in connexion with the obsequies of the parties concerned. — And equally little does later Judaism exhibit any trace, or appear to retain any recollection, of the law under mention.

And here we will pause for one moment to notice what use two modern christian divines, a Protestant and a Catholic, have made of Josephus' statement. Bishop Mant¹⁾ quotes without contradiction or qualification Dean Comber's assurance that — these are his own words — „suicides were forbidden to be buried among the Jews.“ So wholesale a generalization is, however, a bare-faced fiction, unscrupulous, because groundless: such a practice is manifestly not even hinted at in the passage about which we have just been speaking; and such a practice, moreover, proveably did not exist subsequently and does not exist now-a-days among the Jews. Calmet (in his Comment. in Act. Apost.) finds confirmation of Josephus' statement in the mode according to which the body of Judas was dealt with, though he would seem partially to defeat his own purpose by playing this matter, at the same time, over into a first specimen (vide his Dict. s. vv. Judas and Burial) of the practice on the part of the *Christian* church, viz. that of burying suicides in a particular piece of ground; and I need scarcely urge that the tertium comparationis between Calmet's lively, imaginative description of what was done to the Traitor, viz. that his corpse was cast away unburied, and that the belly, becoming rotten or being torn by dogs, at last burst, all the entrails then gushing out to the ground, &c., and the assertion of Josephus about burial after sunset — appears anything but clear. As regards, moreover, the N. T. narrative concerning the matter of the מִתְּחִלָּה לְקַבֵּל, Matthew (XXVII, 6—8) and Luke or Peter (Acts I, 19) herein palpably differ one from the other, each following some different record or tradition. At least, I see no mode of reconciling the two statements which would for a moment hold good before the bar of Reason, unless we should incline to adopt Dr. Paulus' somewhat artificial and almost violent interpretation of the word „purchased“ (ἐκτίκατο), as employed by Peter in Acts I, 18, who, conceiving it to be bitter irony or sarcasm, paraphrases it about thus:²⁾ even in his death has this avaricious man, viz. by

¹⁾ On p. 486 of his edition of the Book of Common Prayer. ²⁾ Gregorius Haubrich über die drei ersten Evangelien, Th. III, zweite Hälfte, pp. 457, 458, 611.

the accidental falling of his corpse, acquired for himself a pretty possession! At all events, since Judas returned the money, he could not be said to have really made any purchase with it, even if he had agreed and intended to do so; nor is any special purpose assigned for which he could have wished to become the proprietor of the potter's field under mention. Far more probable, on the contrary, is the account given in Matthew. Taking for granted that the corpse of the traitor had accidentally fallen into some well-known potter's field, we may assume that the proprietor deemed it thereby desecrated, and was anxious quickly to get rid of it. If we suppose its clay-bed to have been fully exhausted or even long worked, we may all the more easily conceive it to have been sold for the comparatively small sum mentioned, i. e. somewhat less than L. 6. The Priests or Synedrium, in their capacity of a sort of sanitary board, purchased it for a public, though not a particularly sacred or select, use, viz. as a grave-yard for *ἑσῶτες*, probably *Gentile* (cf. Eph. II, 2) pilgrims or strangers who chanced to die in Jerusalem, whom the Palestine Jews considered as more or less impure, and, therefore, not entitled to, or worthy of, interment in aught better than such a (popularly known) unclean spot, to which, as in fact so in name, blood clings, both, because the blood of a suicide had been spilt upon it, and because it had been purchased for its present use with money once given for a deed of blood, i. e. treachery which led to execution. — This same *Hakeldama* (the gloomy Syriac name „field of blood“ would seem to be reducible simply to what has just been stated; for the Prophetic (?) quotations both in Matthew's and Peter's account certainly offer too many difficulties and are too far-fetched to admit of being adopted by unprejudiced students) is said to be still traceable southwards of, but close to, Jerusalem.¹⁾

But to return. Are we, then, bound by the *ipse dixit* of Josephus to take for granted that such a law as he mentions really did exist in his time, although we have no means of tracing it back to a cause, of fixing the date of its origin, of discovering examples of its having been put into practice? Skepticism haunts me irresistibly, and I individually believe that Josephus is here telling a falsehood, albeit no writer I have consulted has scrupled to give credence to our Jewish historian's statement.

¹⁾ Vide Williams, the Holy City, vol. II, p. 495.

Proceeding, finally, to mediaeval and modern times, the information I have been able to gather is exceedingly defective and fragmental. Buxtorf, writing in the 17th century, after having dwelt (in the work quoted in §. 47, vide *ibid.* the chapter on sepulture) minutely upon the solemn tediousness and scrupulosity of the burial ceremonies of the Jews, continues thus. „Eum, qui sibi ipsi violentam mortem consciscit scienter, volenter, nec lugent, nec plangunt, nec vestes propter eum lacerant, nec se discalceant, nec quicquam in ejus gratiam faciunt: quia haec omnia fiunt in honorem mortui; talis autem non meretur, ut quicquam in honorem ejus fiat, quia impius est. Magnum enim peccatum commisit, et magnam illud poenam meretur, juxta illud (here he, as I stated in §. 47, quotes Gen. IX, 5). Recitant super ipso ברכת אבלים, i. e. precessionem lugentium, in honorem viventium superstitum.“ Thus, though everything else that appertains to an honorable funeral is carefully excluded, the *night-time* even is not urged which enacts so important a part in Christian anti-suicidal legislation. — And, as far as I know, not even the above strictness has managed to survive unto our own days. I read thus in the work of a Jewish writer.¹⁾ „In the Jewish Churchyards, those who have led a wicked, dishonest, or dissolute life are buried in a particular place set apart for that purpose, although their friends are able to pay for their burial.“ And, if I at this moment remember rightly what I have orally ascertained, the present Jews bury the corpse of a suicide at the same time as that at which anybody is buried who has died a natural death, i. e. by *day-light*, but omit such burial service as the Rabbi is wont to read over the body of a non-suicide, and lay it, as it is phrased, *not in the row* (i. e. in such portion of the burial ground as is appropriated to criminal and irreligious characters, e. g. next the wall?). Incidentally, I may here state that more especially the early mediaeval Spanish synods included in their injunctions concerning the Jews a prohibition of their burying their dead in general with singing of psalms or hymns!

§. 61. THE OCCURRENCE OF SUICIDE.

The isolated instances of suicide recorded in the Canon and the Apocrypha of the O. T. we have spoken about in the previous Chap-

¹⁾ Levi, succinct account of rites and ceremonies of the Jews, 1780, pp. 171, 172.

ter. Of course, as I hinted already in §. 50, many other examples may have occurred, though they were not thought worthy of record; for historical documents, speaking generally, note down and transmit to posterity suchlike matters only as far as they connect themselves with more or less prominent and renowned persons, unless the phenomenon itself should chance to have assumed a sort of national and wholesale character, as it really did among the Jews in the last century or two before the final destruction of Jerusalem and annihilation of Israel as a nation. At least, Josephus' history of the Jewish War, with which we must compare likewise the last four books of the same writer's Jewish Antiquities, literally teems with narratives of self-slaughter, both wholesale and retail, on the part of the *then* descendants of Abraham; for instance: the rebels under Simon were ready to slay themselves, like the later Assassins, at the mere bidding of their commander; the Jews advised their king Alexander Joannes to destroy himself; Phasaelus killed himself; the wife of Pheroras carried poison about her as a provision against the uncertain future, and attempted self-destruction; also Herod the Great made an attempt upon his own life; some hundreds were induced by the pro-suicidal eloquent oration of the Jewish captain Eleazar to die by each other's and their own hand; and, finally, the almost equally eloquent anti-suicidal oration of Josephus himself could not dissuade or prevent three or four dozen Jewish captains from willing and compassing death in the same manner. But, the reader may multiply examples for himself by referring to the Hist. of the Jewish War.¹⁾ Also the following narrative in Philo Judaeus²⁾ deserves partial transcription. It is well known that the Emperor Caligula, among other mad freaks of his, made the insane attempt to erect at Jerusalem a statue of himself as an object of divine worship, and that this attempt was subsequently frustrated by the unanymous opposition of the Jews who had in these later periods entirely overcome that peculiar predilection for idolatry which had so wofully characterized them, especially the subjects of the kingdom of Israel, in earlier epochs of their history. Philo, now, when recounting this occurrence, introduces to us the Jews of the Holy City as addressing the Roman Governor

¹⁾ Vide e. g. lib. I, c. 7, c. 13, c. 16, c. 30; lib. II, c. 3; lib. III, c. 7, c. 9; lib. IV, c. 1, c. 5, c. 9; lib. V, c. 7, c. 12; lib. VI, c. 5, c. 9. ²⁾ De virtutibus, et legatione ad Cajum, vol. II, p. 581 in Mangey's edition. Cf. also Tacitus, Hist. V, c. 9.

Petronius to the following effect. „Slaying ourselves, we will mingle our blood with that of our relatives whom we shall slay first; let then your commands be imposed upon the dead; God will not censure us (μὲντοι' ἂν οὐδὲ Θεὸς ἱμᾶς) if we thus choose between respect for the Emperor and the adoption (or, keeping) of our own sacred laws. And so it will happen; despising a life not worthy of the name of life, we shall voluntarily cast it away.“ I need scarcely remark that this passage in Philo admits equally of being used as a proof of the pro-suicidal opinions of the, or some of the, Jews in those days. — No wonder, therefore, if even so decided an apologist of suicide as the Elder Pliny should have incidentally scoffed or sneered at such startling frequency of self-destruction among the Jews at the period under mention. Speaking of the balm-tree, he says (H. N. lib. XII, §. 54): „saevire in eam Judaei, sicut in vitam quoque suam.“

We all know that it was more particularly during and after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasianus and Titus that the Jews became in the *modern world* marked objects of suffering, ill-treatment, persecution; and, therefore, christian divines are wont to refer us to *that* siege and destruction as the *first* manifestation of the curse of God, as the *first* fruit of the fulfilment of the predictions of the N. T. touching the displeasure of the Most High against the rejecters and slayers of the Messiah. It does not, however, by any means belong to our task or plan to intercalate here an epitome of the history of the persecutions of the Jews on the part of the Gentiles or Christians in the early and later centuries of the middle ages; for the said persecutions concern us only in as far as they were in their turn the cause of suicide among the Jews. Severe verdicts of churchfathers, unjust synodal decrees and laws of rulers, extravagant popular legends and credulous fabrications — what careful student of the ecclesiastical and secular history of the Middle Ages has not read them, „marked, learned, inwardly digested“ them, and judged of them accordingly as the milk of human kindness or the gall of theological hatred preponderates in his nature? I myself am heartily sick of the subject of *religious persecution as such*, and by much prefer the wiser and milder utterances and injunctions of e. g. Gregory the Great, Constantine the Great, the elder and younger Valentinian, Theodosius the Great, and of Arcadius to such rigor and hostility as are manifest in the utterances of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, in sundry canons of the early mediaeval Spanish synods —

Spain was thus so early true to herself! —, in the prescriptions of the law-book of the Western Goths (*lex Visigothorum*), and in the vulgar and stupid nursery-tales of the superstitious populace of most European countries some centuries ago.

Well, and as to the effects of the harsh treatment of the Jews on the part of the Christians in the middle ages in immediate connexion with our topic? The following specific statements may here find a place. As far as *Germany* is concerned in the *eleventh* century, Gibbon relates ¹⁾ that, during the first crusade, very many of those Jews who inhabited the banks of the Rhine, were persecuted by the christian wayfarers. Unwilling to purchase protection and ease at the expense of their Religion, they barricaded their houses, and precipitated themselves, their families, and their wealth into the river or the flames. As regards *England* in the *twelfth* century, Hume relates ²⁾ that, during the reign of Richard I, 500 Jews at York, having retired into the castle for safety, and finding themselves unable to defend the place of their refuge, murdered their own wives and children, threw the corpses over the wall upon the populace, and, setting fire to the houses, then themselves perished in the flames. And touching the *Portuguese* in the *fifteenth* century, Prescott relates ³⁾ that, when these took the Jewish children from their parents for the purpose of educating them as Christians, many of the said parents killed their children, and many themselves. These few *general* testimonies must suffice, from which it is clear that the Jews in those ages generally preferred destroying themselves and their offspring to giving up their faith, and embracing that of their persecutors. Other less clearly narrated or less satisfactorily authenticated cases may be found in that work of Eisenmenger's ⁴⁾ which I have already often quoted, which I will, therefore, not extract. Also Willstätter (*ubi supra*, p. 168) says that anno 1096 at Treves many, especially wives and virgins, apprehensive for their honor, committed suicide, the greater number, however, becoming slain, but only extremely few allowing themselves to be persuaded to conversion. — Passing, however, over into *Holland*, in the first half of the *seventeenth* century a noteworthy isolated instance presents itself to our notice, the fate of Uriel or Gabriel (the former name he bore as Jew in Holland, the latter

¹⁾ Decline and Fall, ch. LVIII, p. 420. ²⁾ History of England, vol. I, p. 398. ³⁾ History of Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. II, p. 138, note. ⁴⁾ 25. II, pp. 983—986.

as Christian in Portugal) Acosta. We have here an example of Jews driving a Jew into suicide.¹⁾ Acosta was of Portuguese noble extraction; his originally Jewish family had compulsorily become Christians; but he himself grew disgusted with Christianity in its, of course, Catholic form, and subsequently in Holland returned to Judaism. By and by, however, the absurdities and meannesses of the Dutch Jews caused him to quarrel with them; and, the longer the more, the lot of this acute, high-spirited, truth-seeking, unspotted man became a most puzzling and agonizing one. Méconnu, persecuted, forced to submit to the most abominable punishments and penances, inflicted upon him and prescribed to him by his brethren according to the flesh, he, at last, knew not what to set about, and became a prey to the deepest mental anguish. „Quis enim honesti amans libenter sustineat vitam vivere ignominiosam? Et ut aliquis bene dixit, aut bene vivere, aut honeste mori, ingenuum decet“ (ibid. p. 15); and the purport of these his own words evidently declares his intention to kill himself. Some time afterwards, anno 1647, he, having ineffectually attempted to shoot a nephew of his who had been his bitterest enemy, locked himself up in his own apartment and put an end to his life with the identical pistol, being then fifty three years of age. The above-mentioned autobiography was published by Philipp Limborch 1687, i. e. 40 years after Acosta's death, the editor continuing the narrative, and being, therefore, the only voucher for the above related manner of Acosta's death. Since he was, however, not a cotemporary witness, the question has been asked: ought we to trust to him? might not, perhaps, Jewish or Christian calumny only have invented a death for him, and let it become a myth concerning him? However, the doubts raised on this subject have not appeared to me of any considerable weight.²⁾ Interesting to some of my readers it may be to learn in Acosta's own words (ibid. p. 10) that he could not, despite all his exertions, discover a single vestige of a future life or of the immortality of the soul in Mosaism (vide §. 3). „Post coeptum opus (a work on Moses versus the Pharisaical traditions) accidit etiam ut cum resolutione et constanti deliberatione accederem sententiae illorum, qui legis veteris praemium et poenam definiunt temporalem, et de altera vita et immortalitate

¹⁾ Vide his autobiographical sketch *exemplar humanae vitae*, republished anno 1847; and cf. also J. G. Müller's *Bekanntnisse merkwürdiger Männer von sich selbst*, B. II, pp. 160, 161. ²⁾ Vide Bayle in his *Dict. crit. s. v. Acosta*.

animorum minime cogitant, eo praeter alia nixus fundamento, quod praedicta Lex Mosis omnino taceat super his, et nihil aliud proponat observantibus et transgressoribus, quam praemium, aut poenam temporalem.“ A Jewish physician was forthwith commissioned by Acoستا's enemies to compose a book against him in defence of the Immortality of the Soul.¹⁾

We pass on to the 18th and 19th centuries.

Michaelis, writing anno 1775, says in his *Mosaisches Recht*: „now the Jews are again *freest* from the crime of suicide.“ I have no statistical tables before me of the different European or other countries in which Jews reside, to prove or disprove the correctness of this assertion; and, supposing me able to adduce some few instances of suicide accomplished or attempted on the part of Jews who were not *mere obscure individuals*, e. g. that of the London banker Abraham Goldsmith who shot himself anno 1810 in consequence of the sudden loss of a great deal of money,²⁾ or, that of Ludwig Börne (Baruch) subsequently so celebrated as an author, who, when a young man, twice attempted to poison himself, because the widowed Henriette Herz, his senior by twenty years, did not reciprocate his love,³⁾ and though we may now and then find isolated cases of suicidal Jews and Jewesses recorded in the *allgemeine Zeitung* and in the *Times*; yet, taking all in all, I strongly incline to credit Michaelis' above statement, and will now make bold to assign such a priori reasons as appear to me principally to explain this historical phenomenon.

They are not of a specifically *religious* character. Were we even to suppose their Lawgiver and their Prophets really to be the pride and the boast, the light and the love of the more modern and the present Israelites, yet, as we have seen, the avail would be but small on this particular point, since, as we saw in ch. I, their sacred volume does not by any means manifestly and unconditionally interdict suicide *at all*, and even, at all events according to the hermeneutics of Rabbinism, admits, extols, nay, haply, prescribes it *in some cases*. Justly, therefore, methinks Grotius on two separate occasions (annotationes in acta Apost. ad XVI, 25, and in Jud. ad XVI, 30) remarks. „Hebraei autem non tantas edocti patientiae

¹⁾ Lovers of thoughtful, earnest poetry are requested to read Gutakow's tragedy *Uriel Acosta*. ²⁾ Communicated in Osiander's already quoted work. ³⁾ *Erinnerungen an Henriette Herz* by Fürst, p. 178 ff. —

leges, quantas Christiani, aliquas esse mortis sibi et consciscendae causas satis graves existimarunt.“ Inter Hebraeos quaestionem fuisse dubiam, an se interficere liceret, diximus.

But, even if this were otherwise, i. e. if their sacred volume did clearly and expressly condemn and prohibit suicide, I cannot bring myself to believe that the Jews of our time, as a body, would allow themselves to be withheld from suicide by the Old Testament a whit more powerfully and uniformly than they are drawn away from manifold other misdeeds which their ancestral literature cannot be construed into countenancing, nay, must be declared to discountenance, to denounce, to forbid. In olden times already, they as a community ever rebelled against and disobeyed the best elements of their Religion, and persecuted and put to death the noblest and wisest among those who reproved and rebuked them in love and in anger, until they consummated their inimical resistance to what is essentially divine by „receiving Him *not*, when He came unto his own“, by, with some few isolated exceptions, preferring even Barabbas unto Him. And in the middle and early modern ages — who can say much in praise of Israel's fealty to just the holiest and most rational among the behests of either a Moses or an Isaiah? I have more than once quoted Eisenmenger's entitled *Judenthum*. The author was Professor of the Oriental languages at the university of Heidelberg, and the complete title of his work, published unno 1700, shall, translated, here find a place, since not many of my English readers are very likely to be acquainted with it. „Thorough and veritable report, in what manner the hardened Jews in a fearful fashion vilify and degrade the holy trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, scorn the sainted mother of Christ, scoff at the New Testament, the Evangelists and Apostles, the Christian Religion, and despise and curse in the extreme all Christendom; at the same time, are likewise brought to light many other matters and great errors of Jewish religion and theology hitherto either entirely unknown, or only partially known, among the Christians, as also many ridiculous and amusing fables and other absurd things: all of which are forcibly proved from their own, and, indeed, very many books, perused with great labor and unwearied diligence, the Hebrew words being quoted, and faithfully rendered into German.“ Whoso, now, will read these two thickish quarto volumes, allowing even for occasional exaggerations or misinterpretations, will find more than enough

therein to convince him that the spirit of all the genuinely religious features of the Old Testament had all but entirely evaporated out of mediaeval Judaism, and that, on the contrary, just the very lowest, meanest, basest tenets and practices which could by any possibility be extracted from sundry portions of the Old Testament, were put forth as canon of faith and rule of action, that, in a word, what was of the earth earthy and of the flesh fleshly constituted the basis of Judaism, talmudical and rabbinical, up to a comparatively late period in modern times, which circumstance may, if not by any means justify, yet at all events in a great measure account for (leaving deplorable bigotry and the odium theologicum quite out of the question) those antipathies, prejudices, persecutions, and cruelties by which Christians in those ages, evidenced their contempt and horror of the unworthy descendants of Abraham, the degenerated disciples of Moses. Let the history of the operations and influences of Judaism in those portions of Europe,¹⁾ e. g. Poland, where it managed to win something like temporary local sway, testify to the verity of this apparently harsh verdict! And, if we pass on to most modern times, we are again easily and quickly undeceived, if we would fain allow ourselves to be persuaded that the educated and enlightened Jewish communities care over-much about what constitutes the religious essentials of the writings of the Ancient Covenant. We are, for instance, assured²⁾ by one of the spokesmen of the reform-club of the present German Jews, Dr. Goldschmidt, that: „they acknowledge in the Mosaic religion the possibility of an unlimited development (Fortbildung); that for them the collection of controversies, dissertations and prescriptions designated as the Talmud possesses neither in dogmatic nor practical respect authority; that a Messiah who should conduct the Israelites back to Palestine is neither expected nor desired by them, and that they acknowledge no fatherland except the one to which they belong by birth and social relationship.“

The said reasons are, as I take it, rather of a *psychologico-social* nature. The Jews possess, at bottom, a very simple Creed which, in spite of all Talmudical sophistries and puerilities, does not allow of

¹⁾ Vide the elaborate work of the German publicist Moser: *die Juden und ihre Bünde*, 1828, in which more than the needful facts are contained and almost too severely handled. ²⁾ Vide Friedreich's instructive essay on Circumcision in his publication *Der Bibel*, 1848, *Th. II*, p. 159.

such excitement as might call forth either much mental speculation or deep moral agitation. They form in no land whatsoever a perfectly integral portion of the people, and, therefore, those patriotic yearnings and absorbing endeavors of reforming and revolutionary parties which engender so much susceptibility and disappointment in real lovers of their country and their kind, remain to the Hebrew portion of the inhabitants, in a great measure, unknown or, at least, uninteresting in any fullest sense. They are not merely cunning, but also proverbially prudent, in the management of their temporal interests; with steps slow and cautious, but firm and sure, they systematically pursue, and, generally, successfully attain to, a certain measure of earthly prosperity, rarely experience harassing and perplexing entanglements in their worldly affairs, and sudden and heavy pecuniary losses seldom befall them. They usually marry both early and circumspectly, and, since their partners for life are, as it were, usually, albeit only indirectly, provided for them by their parents or other relatives in their own religious community and immediate connexions, much of that romance and sentimentality, warfare and woe which in the hearts and lots of the christians are such fruitful sources of melancholy, misery, and self-wrought death, falls away. They are ordinarily attached to spouse and offspring with a passion easily accounted for by their Oriental temperament, their excludedness, and their selfish narrowness, and, speaking generally, they are faithful and affectionate as husbands and wives, careful and devoted as parents and children, so that those domestic disunions and household imprudences which so frequently cause ruin in christian hearths and homes, are comparatively rare among them. And, finally, they are not only a more or less exclusive and excluded community, but also a somewhat limited one, and have thus more opportunity, ability and desire to protect and assist one another than the generality of christians can be said to possess, so that those among them who should have become unfortunate and embarrassed need not wait long or in vain for the sympathy and support of the prosperous members of their faith, and are, consequently, not allowed or compelled to sink into absolute penury and despair. With which few brief hints, for which the observant christian reader will, I trust, require no apology, we close this Section.

FIFTH SECTION.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I. THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

§. 62. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE N. T.

We now, at length, and more especially in the immediately following few §§, enter upon that terrain which must needs be to all of us not only theoretically of by far the greatest interest, but likewise practically of by far the greatest importance. Though, however, those documents which form the small volume which we are accustomed, with a significantly and beautifully figurative expression, to call „the New Covenant“, are not unto me „holy ground“ in an unconditional, exclusive, absolute sense, yet they are also unto me — and to what thinking, feeling man can they, possibly, be otherwise? — much holier than any other ground I know of, a conspicuously elevated standing-point on which finger-posts are placed which direct us heavenwards, a specifically favored soil in which plants grow that germinated out of divine seeds. Not as writings *supernaturally inspired* in the scholastically theological acceptation of the said terms shall we treat these same documents, but, rather, as humanly conceived and composed by man for man; in point of fact, what I said in §. 46 concerning the standard we deemed ourselves justified in applying to the Canon of the Old Testament, we shall, *mutandis mutatis*, equally apply to the Canon of the New Testament. What we suppose to have been humanly indited, we believe ourselves warranted in reasoning upon humanly, and shall

only desire and endeavor, earnestly and devoutly, to discern and embrace whatsoever therein may reveal itself unto our own fullest and clearest consciousness as having proceeded from the source of Eternal Light, and as being calculated to lead into the sanctuary of Love, Peace, Strength, Holiness. Whilst no superstitious pseudo-reverence or dogmatic hyper-reverence for the authority of either Evangelist or Apostle shall prevent us from „proving all things“, from openly confessing that a narrative appears to us doubtful, or an argument inconclusive, if we sincerely believe defect or error to be therein traceable, we would yet fain try „to hold fast“ what seems to us true, good, and beautiful.

It is, verily, a sad and saddest thing, when but too many among ourselves seemingly, or really, let an αὐτὸς ἔφα close and seal their lips, though it does not silence the enquiries of thought, and cannot hush the heart's secret misgivings; for only if it be able to do so and really do so, is such ipse-dixit-faith an offspring of genuine philosophy and a requirement of true piety.

§. 63. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JESUS.

Before we, as far as our immediate subject is concerned, enquire into the *precepts* of the Apostles and even of Jesus himself, we must dwell upon the *example* of the founder of Christianity, of him as a *living law* unto a world out of which pure virtue and deep reverence seemed well nigh to have vanished, and upon the relation of his *personal character* to what we shall regard and put forth as the spirit and inhold of Christianity. I must, however, observe, almost in self-defence, and not from even the remotest wish or intention to indulge in any kind of sentimental and sickly religious cant, that it is extremely painful to me to have to discuss Jesus at all, as far as either his *life* or his *death* come into consideration, in connexion with the topic of self-destruction. But, the critico-historical character of this Essay compels me to undertake this, at best, invidious task, inasmuch as both rancorous enemies and mistaken friends of Christianity have, in different ages and for different purposes, drawn the life, and, more especially, the death, of Jesus into a significant, or, even a decisive, nexus with suicide. Theirs, therefore, and not mine, is the guilt, if the entire supposition and discussion should appear after all anomalous and gratuitous.

Since, now, much, nay, almost all, of what we shall have to advance in connexion with this incongenial enquiry must derive not only its peculiar coloring, but also its specific basis, from the view we take of what in dogmatic terminology is called „the nature“ of Jesus, it behoves me at the very outset not to shrink from avowing in the most explicit words that Jesus of Nazareth is to me neither more nor less than a *mere man*, in no manner or measure *essentially* different from any and every other *human being*. — I know well that very many of the wisest and noblest of the earth, since eighteen hundred years, have believed and taught otherwise, and that millions upon millions of our fellow-mortals have, thinking deeply and feeling ardently, lived virtuously and died happily in the belief and under the impression that He was *God*, the Son of God, the God-Man or Man-God. This fact alone would suffice to prove to me that such a faith had and has a perfect right to take its place, as in the religious consciousness of man, so in the historical development of christianity. Moreover, such a faith always has been, and, perhaps, ever will remain, the faith of the majority; but, when and where was the majority the truly „elect“ by gifts and graces of the best, i. e. mental and moral, kind? Many accommodate themselves from self-interest to the favored and fashionable belief, still more assimilate themselves to it from sentimental weakness, and by far the most assent to it, or, rather, do not dissent from it, from sheerest sluggishness of thought and indifference of feeling. Why, then — knowing this —, should we bow with much deference and reverence to the „I believe“ from the lips of the Multitude? In this matter, if in any, voices must be *weighed*, not counted. Nor am I by any means prepared to deny that, when Creeds, Councils, Catechisms embodied this faith as the standard of *biblical* orthodoxy, they were in the right, inasmuch as they regarded the utterances ascribed to Jesus himself by the evangelists, and developed more fully by some of the apostles, more especially Paul, as authoritative and unquestionable; for, despite some more or less doubtful and obscure passages in the N. T. which look a different way, the N. T. as a whole, i. e. taking all in all, cannot, I think, fairly be said to teach anything less than the supernatural origin and essence, i. e. the so-called Godhead, of Jesus. Nevertheless, in consequence of such demands as man's reasoning faculties ever have made, and ever will make, upon his religious convictions, at all periods of the

history of the Christian church parties have arisen which, led by men of vigorous intellect and conscientious independence, have attempted to modify the more generally accepted (thence, so-called orthodox) homoousian theory of the nature of Jesus into the less generally accepted (thence, so-called heterodox) homoiousian one; and this latter theory, again, itself became, the longer the more, re-modified and ultra-modified until it ceased to look like its original self, and gradually coined for itself new and somewhat more intelligible names, e. g. Unitarian. When we read the story of extravagant homoousianism and refining homoiousianism as it stands recorded in the controversies, transactions, decrees of innumerable Ecclesiastical Councils and Synods, we might almost fancy it to be a matter of a mere *pun*, puerile and ridiculous, if we were not quickly startled out of any suchlike levity by the profound and venomous earnest which ruled the antagonistic parties, and caused indefinite bloodshed on the very altars of the temple of our Religion; for man is, time immemorial, of such sort that, whenever his creed is at stake, obscure notions and mysterious words become in a far greater degree than great conceptions or noble purposes the source of reciprocal anathematization and persecution. Even in our own days, for instance, Menckanism and Irvingism with their somewhat harmless assumption of Jesus' having been born into fallen human nature, though they, nevertheless, retained the full belief in his perfect divinity, could not escape condemnation and expulsion. The rope is tightly drawn, and yet one must retain one's equilibrium upon it, though the danger of over-balancing one's self towards the right or the left be so great, if one be strong and bold enough to move at all! Also, when we peruse the writings of the two Socini, of the German Rationalists, of the elder and present English and American Unitarians, we cannot fail to be struck with the over-elaborate distinctions as well as with the eloquent pathos by force of which many of them would fain convince and persuade themselves and us that, though Jesus was certainly not God, he was still *more than mere* man, &c. With such processes one may fairly be affirmed, as it seems to me, to lose one's self into definitions and fixations which are in verity far more marvellous and mysterious, unintelligible and unsatisfactory than the ecclesiastical credo itself is, from which such persons profess to dissent most materially, and from which they, indeed, most materially do dissent. No! far better, I

ween, than suchlike *indecision* of feeling or *sophistry* of argument are those gigantic feats of ancient church-logic by which the homousian faith was established, or, those loftiest flights of enthusiastic excitement by which christian mysticism was created. Early associations and prepossessions sway us all to a greater or minor extent; but, unless I err much, all halting midway between the creed of the *absolute* Divinity and that, if creed it may be called, of the *absolute* Humanity of Jesus, is the result of a covenant between thought and feeling which is unnatural and, therefore, can in no wise be relied on or upheld. I, too, if it be not arrogant or indelicate to speak for a moment of myself, have tried for many a long and weary year, but tried at last in vain, to stop — on my departure from *Evangelicalism* — short of the goal of *Humanitarianism*; *either-or* is also here the watch-word; and they, whose reverence for Jesus or whose personal piety would suffer by arriving at that form of belief at which I have arrived, will verily! do well to abide in the faith into which they were, as I was, baptized and in which they were, as I was, educated. — It is most true, to the denial of the Godhead of Jesus ally themselves of necessity also the denial of Original Sin, Redemption, the Trinity. But, are sincere devotion, heroic self-denial, holy philanthropy, the essence of the christian religion, inseparable from *them*? God forbid! I, also, can discern what of depth and beauty there is in the faith in a suffering and dying Deity (which faith is, as we have seen in Sect. III, not even by any means peculiar to Christianity); but I can discern therein, likewise, morally pernicious elements and influences, elements *easily mistaken*, influences *often abused*, which have manifested themselves in every age and clime, sometimes in one manner and sometimes in another; nor will I hesitate to confess that on *ethical* grounds even more than on dogmatical ones I prefer the *Man* Jesus to the *God* Jesus as the „corner-stone“ of my religious faith and spiritual life. For, better, methinks, it is to imitate the man Jesus, born in poverty, obscurity, living humbly and nobly, dying heroically and trustfully, and to be convinced of the necessity of thus imitating him, if we would be Christians at all, than — mark this, O reader! — to divinize him not only into a scape-goat for a sinfulness which we inherited, but also for a sinningness which we are loth to give up. I know well that the spirit and custom of our land in these days will induce and permit even the shallowest, coars-

est, most ignorant, made all the bolder by their very ignorance, shallowness and coarseness, to shoot off poisoned arrows of reproach and contempt at this confession of mine, unknown and uninfluential though I be. One cannot prevent them from doing so, one need not wonder at their doing so: it is their nature, and their style; but I may remind persons of this stamp that whoso is in earnest about Truth dwells in a strong spiritual castle of clear consciousness and inward peace, inaccessible to attacks of such kind which can only batter and deface, injure and disturb somewhat mere outward moats and ramparts. — Whatsoever creed is born out of matured reflection, progressive self-culture, keen inward experience, and wide observation of actual life has alone a right to tell of itself, of whatsoever kind it may chance to be; for it is diamond-hard and diamond-bright, it is both reason and passion in their united clearness and strength. — But, to our subject.

I. His Life.

What we are accustomed to call „the temptation in the wilderness“ here then, first of all, presents itself to us (Matth. IV, 5—7; cf. Luke IV, 9), i. e. that narrative which is so difficult, so significant, so suggestive that interpreters ever and anon exercise their ingenuity afresh upon it, that preachers never tire to select their texts from it, and that the loftiest intellect and the simplest heart are equally able to extract from it, as material for speculation, so balm of comfort. We might, perhaps, call it the briefest, deepest, most momentous and most sacred drama ever enacted on this earth's stage, ever recorded by human speech; but — was it a monodrama or a duodrama? a literal fact, or, a mere dream? Really an external conflict, or, only an internal struggle? To me it appears — I must not now stop to assign my reasons in detail — shall I say an *allegory*, or, a *parable*, or, a *myth*? Any one of these terms, more especially, however, the last of them, in consequence of Strauss's well-known and ill-reputed work, may easily be misunderstood; I will, therefore, state more accurately what I mean thereby. We define to ourselves the scene at issue as a *psychomachia*, i. e. as a dramatic representation of the conflict between flesh and spirit, of the dualism of the human and divine elements in the nature of Jesus of Nazareth, of such conflict and dualism as each of us, too, experiences the more vividly and intensely the deeper and holier our nature is, the more there is to be developed in it, and the more

trying and inimical our environing influences are. Whatsoever is of the World and the Devil, in the spiritually and everlastingly true acceptations of these terms, passion, pomp, power, did, no doubt, beckon unto Jesus, and bid him waver, yield, follow; no doubt, too, he neither followed, nor yielded, nor wavered, but, rather, preserved, developed, perfected within himself such fulness of the highest and purest elements of human nature as God had dowered him with beyond all other men in the story of our race, that fulness so mysterious in its depth and potency, radiance and loveliness that we may affirm with *moral* verity, though in *figurative* diction, that in and through him our common nature *deified* itself, or — „God became incarnate.“ Therefore and thus we discern psychological and ethical truth and reality in the *idea* of the scene before us, though we cannot but believe that the *investment* of this idea, is purely imaginative and fictitious, just as in the mythico-didactic poem of Job something similar is put forth with, though naïve, yet sublime, phantasy (for, it matters little, whether the corporeal appearance of Satan be before the Celestial Throne or in the Judean Wilderness). Allusions in ancient Hebrew story had passed over into superstitions of early Christian belief. The soul of the Hero, like that of every mortal man born of woman, peccable and fallible, possessed of free will so as to be capable of either virtue or vice, and „in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin“, ¹⁾ is still visible through the gauze of Poetry, and the Messiah remains greater than any Epic sung of him, ²⁾ aye, or, than any critical life penned of him. ³⁾

The specific question, however, with which we are here concerned, is this: does any portion of the narrative before us represent Jesus as having been tempted, i. e. felt himself tempted, to self-destruction? Of course, the only passage which could, by any possibility, be this way interpreted is the following (according to Matth.

¹⁾ Heb. IV, 15. ²⁾ The English reader may remember that Milton's *Paradise Regained* is, properly speaking, only a minute and tedious narrative in blank verse of the temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness. ³⁾ I allude to the recent works of David Friedrich Strauss, Bruno Bauer, &c. The former writer construes the gospel-story into poetical flower-wreathings of the Saga, *undesignedly* festooned in the primitive congregations; the latter writer pronounces the gospel-life of Jesus an *artificially* invented „*Strangespinnst*“, gradually wrought, by imitations and corrections, out of germs to be found in Mark. For my own part, I have, as a humble wayfarer, found repose and refreshment for my soul under the tree of the gospel-history of Jesus, and care not to inspect its every leaf too microscopically.

the *second*, but, according to Luke, the *third* or last, temptation) one: „if thou be the son of God, cast thyself down.“ Augustinus, when arguing against suicide, and more especially against the suicidal extravagances of the Donatists, really does impart to it such a power. One quick glance at these same fanatic ascetics themselves, the so-called Circumcelliones, thus named because they were in the habit of roaming „circum cellas rusticorum“, before we quote this their chief historian and main antagonist's brief and graphic description of their suicidal doings, in the course of which, whilst refuting their suicidal opinions, he hazards that peculiar comment which here, properly speaking, is what alone we have to lay stress upon. The reader is, probably, aware that the Donatists constituted in the commencement of the 5th cent. a very numerous and powerful community, so that e. g. at a conference held in Carthage at that period 279 of their Bishops, whose whole number at that time is said to have amounted to 400, appeared. Only on account of some disciplinary affairs connected with the election of a bishop of Carthage, not because of *doctrinal* points, the Circumcelliones separated from the Donatists, and, dubbing themselves „the sons of the saints“, under the leadership of a certain Fasir and Asid in Africa, gradually became among other things so enthusiastic in their profession and confession of Christianity that they not only *sought* the death of martyrs, but also *killed* themselves by dozens at once, hurling themselves in solemn assemblage from precipices, &c.; nay, they likewise even *caused* others to do the same.¹⁾ However, the following two somewhat lengthy passages from Augustinus' writings²⁾ will afford to us that information of which we are in immediate quest. „Jam vero per abrupta praecipitia, per aquas et flammās occidere seipsos, quotidianus illis ludus fuit. Haec enim eos tria mortis genera diabolus docuit, ut mori volentes, quando non inveniebant quem terrent, ut ejus gladio ferirentur, per saxa se mitterent, aut ignibus gurgitibusque donarent. Quis autem illos haec docuisse credendus est, possidens cor eorum, nisi ille qui et Salvatore nostro, ut se de pinna templi praecipitaret, tamquam de Lege suggessit? Cujus suggestionem a se utique prohiberent, si magistrum Christum in corde

¹⁾ Vide e. g. Sismondi's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, p. 83, and Gibbon ch. 20 towards the conclusion, and ch. 33 in the middle.

²⁾ Epist. 185, seu de correctione Donatistarum liber, Opera, T. II, p. 648, and contra litteras Petiliani, lib. II, cap. 49, Opera, T. IX, p. 254.

portarent. Sed quia in se diabolo potius dederunt locum, aut sic pereunt quemadmodum grex ille porcorum, quem de monte in mare turba daemonum dejecit: aut illis mortibus erepti, et pio matris Catholicae gremio collecti, ita liberantur, quemadmodum est a Domino liberatus, quem pater ejus a daemonio sanandum obtulit, dicens, quod aliquando cadere in aquam, aliquando in ignem, soleret.“ — „Confessores illi vestri, quando se ipsos praecipitant, cui ducunt martyrium, utrum Christo qui talia suggerentem diabolum repulit, an potius ipsi diabolo, *qui talia Christo facienda suggessit?* Duae sunt maxime viles atque usitatae mortis eorum qui se ipsos interimunt, laqueus et praecipitium. Tu certe dixisti in primis partibus hujus epistolae, Laqueo traditor periit, laqueum talibus dereliquit: hoc ad nos omnino non pertinet. Neque enim veneramur nomine martyrum eos, qui sibi collum ligaverunt. Quanto autem nos probabilius in vos dicimus, Magister traditoris diabolus praecipitium Christo suadere voluit, et repulsus est. Quid ergo dicendi sunt, quibus hoc suasit et auditus est? quid enim, nisi inimici Christi, amici autem diaboli; discipuli seductoris, condiscipuli traditoris? Spontaneas enim mortes ab uno magistro utrique didicerunt, ille laqueum, isti praecipitium.“

Does, then, the said second temptation in any way refer to self-destruction? If we look at it in its legitimate nexus of suggestion and reply, in its simplest and most natural bearings, we may find it in sundry respects sufficiently peculiar, but we shall, surely, not be able to trace in it the reference insinuated by our churchfather. All the three temptations have manifestly for their main and sole import the proposal of means whereby Jesus might make a strong and palpable *external* impression upon the Jews in revealing his power over Nature and acquiring Worldly facilities for evidencing himself as such a Messiah as the bulk of the Jewish people with their fallacious hopes and in their lowest greeds both expected and desired; and in this point of view the nearest meaning of the second temptation would be simply about as follows: perform even the most strange and useless things merely for the purpose of exciting the wonder of the multitude and proving thyself to stand under the especial protection of the Godhead; become, as it were, a sort of juggler to win the applause, favor, support of the credulous and carnal who look for, and delight in, really or apparently miraculous shows. Cf. in this respect what is said of the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matth. XVI, 1 ff., and of Herod in Luke XXIII, 8. And.

Jesus' rebutting of the said temptation would solely convey, in perfect keeping with the genuine spirit and entire tenor of the psalm (XCI, 11, 12) upon which the Tempter's encouragement is expressly based, that, whereas those who place their confidence in God on the path of righteousness and in the cause of duty will by Him be specially protected and delivered, whatever dangers may threaten and beset them, the challenging of extraordinary and miraculous interference and assistance on the part of God, if mere display or curiosity be the object of such a challenge, is of evil and of folly, and shall therefore be by God disavowed and confounded. It is, as far as any ethical purpose is at stake, needless trouble to enquire what particular portion of the Temple is meant by „a pinnacle“, and, whether its height were such that casting one's self down therefrom would have been, humanly speaking, *certain* death; for, the only bearing which the said temptation can have upon our topic is this: to expose one's self to any peril which is not provoked and warranted by circumstances more or less necessarily connecting themselves with a faithful and conscientious discharge of our recognized God-appointed vocation, is a mere *tempting* (παράζω, ἰσκι, Deut. VI, 16; Exod. XVII, 7) of God, i. e. a wanton and wayward testing of His power and kindness when and where really no worthy object exists to call for the manifestation of the former, no noble motive can entitle us to expect the exercise of the latter: only in already ascertained duty's work *ought* God to be *trusted*, though death should menace (cf. e. g. John V, 18; VII, 19; VIII, 59).

Though I am not aware that any other churchfather or any later divine has interpreted the temptation at issue into an instigation to actual self-destruction, yet, if I mistake not, as I already hinted in §. 13, we owe certain narratives and expressions of the middle ages in part at least to an *implied* similar construction of the second temptation; and, moreover, we shall discover from another portion of the New Testament to which I am about to direct attention, that some of the Jewish cotemporaries of Jesus, undoubtedly, surmised an *inward temptation* to actual suicide not an impossible concomitant of the varied trials, sufferings, disappointments, difficulties which attached to his life. I allude to what is recorded by the evangelist John (ch. VIII, 21, 22). „Then said Jesus again unto the Pharisees: I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews: *will he*

kill himself? because he saith: whither I go, ye cannot come." Reading this passage as it stands written, without desiring to find either more or less than the words themselves in their literal and legitimate sense convey, no reasonable person can doubt the exact nature and drift of the *brutally base* and *frivolously silly* suspicion and insinuation therein expressed. Nevertheless, various ancient and modern theologians, finding no *lectio varia* on this occasion to justify any other interpretation, must needs invent and propose one; or, shrinking from imputing to the Pharisees so heinous and groundless a supposition, sundry ingenious and erudite divines must needs have recourse to purely fictitious conjectures. But, far wiser and alone wise it will be to leave to the scornful question before us its natural and nearest meaning, and to leave, at the same time, the thoroughly and absolutely worldly and earthy Pharisees and Jews to the unqualified indignation and condemnation charged with which their own question rebounds upon themselves, charged with which Jesus' so meekly firm and brief reply (vv. 23, 24) in its profound sublimity shall cause it to rebound until the end of time. Why, indeed, should not the Jews of those days have, as unprovokedly as self-degradingly, insinuated suchlike? Surely, we know them to have done even worse than this! However, the mockery is, besides being malicious, senseless; wherefore, we need not, as some over-scrupulous commentators have done, go in search of the sequence of thought the Pharisees may have been pursuing. On the lips of shallow-minded and low-souled men the most malignant innuendo is often only a jest in their own eyes, altogether pointless, except for the venomous sting!

II. His Death.

But, it is the death of Jesus itself, its cause and manner, what preceded and accompanied it to which we have more specifically to look, whilst discussing this painful — almost sickeningly so to all clear-sighted and devout-hearted men — portion in our historical review of the topic of suicide.

The churchfather Chrysostomos, in one of his eloquent panegyric homilies on martyr-suicides, takes occasion, whilst extolling the virgins Bernice and Prosdoce and their mother Domnina, who had drowned themselves to escape apprehended violation (vide a later § of this Chapter), to liken their voluntary death to that of Jesus. We will, however, quote such few of his own words as are most

pertinent to our purpose:¹⁾ καὶ ἀπεπνίγοντο οὕτως· μᾶλλον δὲ οὐκ ἀπεπνίγοντο, ἀλλ' ἐβαπτίζοντο βάπτισμα καινὸν καὶ παράδοξον. καὶ εἰ βούλει μαθεῖν, ὅτι βάπτισμα σαφὲς τὸ τότε γεγόμενον, ἄκουσον πῶς ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν θάνατον τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ βάπτισμα καλεῖ (viz. Matth. XIX, 39) κ. τ. λ. — Whatever allowances, now, we may feel inclined to make for the zealous exaggerations and inaccurate flourishes of pulpit-rhetoric, we can scarcely hesitate to pronounce the attempt to justify the suicidal deaths of some of the early martyrs by so inappropriate and unnecessary a parallel an unwise and irreverent procedure, nay, the sheerest puerile declamation. In later §§ we shall learn that Chrysostomos as well as most of the other churchfathers must be considered as having formed a somewhat imprudent and intemperate, nay, a morally reprehensible and indefensible, estimate of the merits of martyr-suicides in and by themselves. Looking, however, away for the present from this circumstance, we can scarcely wonder that, after such a precedent, howsoever figuratively and relatively we may incline to interpret it, ruder hands should in later ages try to wring shriller and more spectral sounds from the chord thus struck by the fingers of enthusiastically loving zeal, if a desire existed either to defend suicide on the grounds of christianity, or, to indulge in a sneer at the expense of the founder of christianity. Indeed, sundry other churchfathers and early christian writers are, however unwittingly and unwillingly, more or less guilty of similarly injudicious and equivocal utterances, so that one feels one's self called upon to receive sundry dicta of theirs on this matter only „cum grano salis“, as it were. Thus, for instance, Nonnus²⁾ who penned a metaphrasis epica evangelii s. Joannis in the 5th century, whilst paraphrasing the words „and he gave up the ghost“ (ch. XIX, 30), expressly says that Jesus ceded himself θελήμονι πτότῳ, volenti morti. Nor will I omit to state that e. g. the far earlier Tertullianus,³⁾ for the purpose of demonstrating the same fact, but in reference to the words, „into thy hands I commend my spirit“, affirms that Jesus gave up the ghost with one word of free-will, thus anticipating the service of the executioner“ (praevento carnificis officio); and Count

¹⁾ Opera omnia in Montfaucon's edition, T. II, p. 643. ²⁾ Line 159, p. 117 of Abram's edit. with superadded Latin version, 1623. It may be worth while here to add that ibid. p. 94, lines 45, 46, Nonnus tastelessly and needlessly paraphrases the already discussed passage John VIII, 21, 22 into various kinds of suicide: „will he die by the fool's rope, or plunge a sword into his body?“ &c. ³⁾ Apologeticus, cap. 21.

Friedr. Stolberg, when commenting (Æt. V, p. 566 of the work quoted in §. 50) on this very gratuitous dictum of our churchfather's, assures us that Jesus „thereby indicated that he, according to the powers of nature, could have lived for hours yet, but *would* die now, because everything had been accomplished; that he died now, because he who had about four months previously said to the Jews what is contained in John X, 17, 18, *would* die.“

Let us, then, after having stated this little by way of preparation, proceed to learn from sundry modern authors what strange and sad use suchlike hints have been put to, chiefly by moralists who have argued in defence of suicide.

Donne, in the work we shall discuss in a subsequent §, after having amused himself with sundry would-be metaphysical niceties, i. e. sundry extremely illogical and superstitious bêtises, after having quoted, though irrelevantly, a passage from the tangibly and notoriously spurious letter from Jesus to Abgarus, king of Edessa, and after having armed himself with various testimonies of scholastic divines, advances in partial proof of his own pro-suicidal theory the fact that the actual emission of the soul of Jesus was his own voluntary act, inasmuch as no human means could have killed him.¹⁾ — Holbach, in that book we shall also comment on in a later §, whilst inculcating his defence of suicide, eschews all lengthy orthodox or heterodox disquisitions on the point under mention, and affirms as briefly as boldly „le Messie ou le Fils de Dieu des Chrétiens, s'il est vrai qu'il soit mort de son plein gré, fut évidemment un suicide:“ on which occasion, I may incidentally remind the reader that, a decennary or so after this sentence had been penned and published, in the self-same city of Paris, Marat, even he, was likened unto Jesus, and Camille Desmoulin publicly called Jesus a sans-culotte. — Thomas Paine who, as far as I know, has written neither in favor nor in disfavor of suicide, on one occasion,²⁾ nevertheless, puts the following question with explicit reference to the death of Jesus: „can our gross feelings be excited by no other objects than tragedy and suicide?“ However, if I understand this — in more than one sense of the epithet — drunken defender of the rights of man aright, he would appear to mean to say that, suppo-

¹⁾ Vide, however, also Nouv. Dict. Hist., 1783, as quoted in Zouch's notes on Walton's life of Donne. ²⁾ Age of Reason, part. I, p. 10, and cf. part. II, p. 80, in the edition of 1849.

sing Jesus to be God, God became, as it were, a murderer of himself by dying at his own instigation. — Worse still, if this were possible, is the parallel which the disciples of a soi-disant reformation or rather re-construction (i. e. in reality, perversion and destruction) of christianism in this our 19th century have instituted between Saint-Simon († 1825) and Him of Nazareth as regards the mode and effect of the death of the latter. The said French Count, having felt life too heavy for himself „doubts a moment, has for a moment ceased to hope, implores death, he seeks it, his hand arms itself against himself, and the flash furrows his brow! But, his hour had not yet come, his mission was not accomplished. A religious enthusiasm penetrates him, henceforward the scholar (*savan*), the craftsman (*industriel*) no longer speaks; a song of love streams from the lips of the mutilated Count, the *divine* man reveals himself: *new Christianity* (i. e. the realization of what Moses had prophesied and Jesus had prepared) is given unto the world.“ Thus in the *Nouveau Christianisme*, dialogues entre un conservateur et un novateur, 1er dialogue, 1825, VIII, p. 91, as referred to by Carové.¹⁾ Or, as — according to the same authority, *ibid.* pp. 221, 222 — we read in one of the Saint-Simonist sermons (!) preached in one of the Temples of Paris, the capital of a nominally christianized and imaginarily most cultivated nation, in these our own days. „But, listen! listen, what new character the life of this revealer impresses upon the law of futurity and of peace! Moses slays; — — Jesus offers himself as victim, and imposes upon mankind the necessity of a continuous penance A new sacrifice is made; for also Saint-Simon, in his bold progress, excommunicates himself; but, overwhelmed by humiliations, bowed down by calumnies, misknown, scorned, impelled by Society to doubt his sublime mission and his entire life, he does not demand from Society death, loads not upon it the curse of the shedding of the blood of the Just; he himself is the sacrificer. Thanks be unto God, thanks unto Saint-Simon! the bloody sacrifice of themselves or of others which had been fully accomplished by all revealers, remains uncompleted; and St. Simon, greater after having laid hands upon himself (*après s'être frappé*), commences a new era, in which the fearful law of blood remains abrogated.“ Well might the amiable and soulful Prof. Lange indig-

¹⁾ Der Saint-Simonismus und die neuere französische Philosophie, 1831, p. 111.

nantly and scornfully remark in his essay on „the materials of anti-christianity in our time“, with regard to the just quoted and kindred thoroughly disgusting, whether blasphemous or insane, passages thus.¹⁾ „One here sees, how cunningly this school understands how to convert black into white; and how a prophet who is glorified by suicide, is an antipode of Christ who is glorified by the death of holy sacrifice. But, in the measure in which his disciples make Saint-Simon on this point an antitype, they make him an anti-christ.“

Also, however, among the Jews assertions to the same effect would appear not to have been entirely wanting. At least, according to the annals of the Byzantine chronicler Phrantzes,²⁾ when in the 15th cent. the Emperor John Palaeologus II, after a long and learned dispute converted a Jew, Xenus by name, to the Christian faith, the first objection which the said Israelite urged in reference to Jesus was — I will, for the sake of exactness, quote our author's own words: *εἰ οὐκ ἀναγκαιῶς ἀλλ' ἐκὼν, ὡς αὐτὸς φησ, ἀπεθάνεν ὁ Χριστὸς, φανερὸν ἄρα ἑαυτοῦ νομίζοντ' ἂν εἰκότως, καὶ ψυχικῆς διὰ τοῦτο τιμωρίας ἄξιος.* Gibbon who, in note 35 to ch. 66 of his *Decline and Fall*, makes a passing allusion to this controversy, says that the Emperor „parried the Jew's objection with a mystery“; but in this matter he is not quite correct, as the reader who will turn to the original may easily convince himself; for, though the Emperor's counter-argument is as little profound as it is elaborate, it is in a fashion sensible and, at all events, so perspicuous as not to be really mysterious at all. But I must likewise here add that among the numerous horrible and ridiculous epithets which the mediaeval Jews (vide Eisenmenger's often quoted work, *Et.* I, p. 716) bestow upon Jesus, e. g. a dog, an abomination, a rogue, the hanged one (*tolui*), a murderer (*rozeach*; this, probably, in consequence of the connexion into which the Talmudists with their wonted idiocy bring Jesus with Cain (*ibid.* p. 101), that of a suicide does not occur.

We will now proceed to cast a glance, as calm and searching as we can, at what may be said in answer to the above insinuations. The more hallowed and mournful the subject is, the more simply and sincerely we ought to deal with it.

There can be but little doubt that the said charges, e. g. that

¹⁾ *Bermishte Schriften*, B. II, pp. 22, 23. ²⁾ *Liber II*, c. 12, in Bekker's edit., Bonn, 1838, p. 164.

of Holbach, hinge mainly on the passage to which Stolberg, as above quoted, makes special reference, Jesus' own assertion in John X, 18, with which cf. e. g. Matth. XXVI, 53 &c. „No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power (ἐξουσία) to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of my Father.“ Indeed, I remember that Dr. Watts in his „defence against the temptation to self-murder“, 1725, discusses this passage controversially, i. e. anti-suicidally; but I have not his essay now again to refer to, and I only recollect that he, rendering ἐξουσία by right, authority,¹⁾ which meaning it, doubtless, also has, (cf. e. g. Matth. XXI, 23) but not, as I think, in the passage before us, ascribes, as we might naturally infer from his standing-point, a more or less *extraordinary* and *mystical* sense to the entire passage, whereas we cannot but conceive ἐξουσία to signify here literally power (cf. e. g. Matth. IX, 8), simply and solely what we should commonly understand by power, and the sense of the entire passage to be natural and human only. Indeed, I cannot hesitate to subscribe to the following brief and beautiful manner in which Strauss, in one of the last and most impressive of his theological pamphlets, places before us the death of Jesus as in and by itself „caused by the collision of circumstances with his spirit and character.“ Here are the ipsissima verba we refer to.²⁾ „Er (this same death) war geschichtlich durch das Verhältniß bedingt, in welches die Idee und der Plan Jesu zu der Gefinnung und Stimmung der damaligen Juden und ihrer Obern trat; sittlich bedingt aber durch die Reinheit und Stärke seines Willens, welche ihm in dem Kampfe für die erkannte Wahrheit und Aufgabe seines Lebens zu weichen verbot.“ All we feel ourselves called upon to do, is, therefore, to offer a few observations in illustration and confirmation of this view of the matter.

For my own part, I attach little or no weight to the question, whether Jesus of Nazareth really was, or really was not, *the Messiah*, a Messiah foretold in Hebrew prophecies, confirmed as such by multifarious miracles. Beyond all dispute and debate is, most assuredly, this one fact: he was *not* that kind of Messiah whom the Jews were expecting eighteen hundred years ago, and, in part at least, still expect, *not* the hero, liberator, ruler with pomp and might and glory

¹⁾ Works, vol. II, p. 361. ²⁾ Vergängliches und Bleibendes im Christenthum. Selbstgespräche, S. 13. On p. 79 of his zwei friedliche Blätter, 1839.

whom they anxiously awaited, and whom they would fondly have welcomed. Yet, we doubt not, in a deeper, holier, an everlasting sense he was and shall remain until the end of time the true Messiah, whether prophesied of or not, whether attested by miracles or not, unto Mankind at large, a spiritual king by God anointed, an eternal priest by God ordained, a Redeemer from spiritual bondage, a Captain of Salvation unto every faithfully militant human soul. Nevertheless, if we look away altogether from the question of Messiahship, and view Jesus solely in the light of a religious Teacher, Guide, Reformer, Innovator, it does not seem difficult to account for the rejection of him not only, but also his crucifixion. We find the Jews described in the Torah already (Exod. 32, 9, 22; 33, 3; Deut. 9, 13; 32, 6, 20) as a „stiff-necked“ people, a people „set on mischief“, a „very froward“ generation, children „in whom is no faith“, a „foolish and unwise“ people; we find, as I more than once hinted in Sect. IV, them in the prophetic ages, whilst — and this is the strange anomaly, the self-contradiction, the collision of antipodal characteristics in this marked race — producing isolated individuals who had depth enough to discern and earnestness enough to castigate their general depravity and national delinquencies, on their part, as a body, making a practice of rebelling against whatsoever was promulgated unto them by such divinely missioned and humanly noble heralds, of visiting persecution upon them, and, if possible, of awarding a violent and shameful death unto them. Thence, I could never feel surprised at what is an indisputable fact that they at once became singularly odious, not only on dogmatico-religious, but also on civil-social, grounds to the Greeks and Romans, as soon as the latter came into contact with them, albeit it is true that they had *then*, into the bargain, already fallen politically, and sunken spiritually, and that the classical Pagans labored under palpable ignorance and manifest misconception of some of the chief tenets and real features of Judaism. When, therefore, Jesus, a Jew only according to the flesh, but *an anti-Jew according to the spirit*, appeared among them, how should he have found a party among them, how could he have expected to create one? Were not all the mental and moral characteristics of both priesthood and populace totally different from his? Did he not teach and live in absolute antagonism to Jewish particularism, the vain conceit of specific electedness? To Pharisaic mechanism, which interpreted the

Law into a dead letter and construed life into a hideous sham? To Sadducaic skepticism which avowedly and publicly denied eternal life? To Essene mysticism, to Therapeut monkism, to Zealot fanaticism? To the People's being swayed by blind rulers, and misguiding priestly tricks, themselves remaining illiterate, unintelligent, confiding as a yoke-oppressed mass at the beck and call of „gnat-straining and camel-swallowing“ Rabbis? Who, then, was there among this sanctimonious and hypocritical, short-sighted and bigoted multitude to be willing or able to comprehend and appreciate a wisdom so much loftier than that in which they themselves had been educated, to learn doctrines which would not sanction traffic upon superstitions, to espouse principles which bade the corrupt heart glance keenly at its own perverseness, adopt practices which demanded a worship deep and pure, truthful and spiritual in lieu of empty forms and sensuous farces? Louder was the voice of Jesus, more searching his eye, keener his words, more solemn his menaces, more hallowed his reproofs, exhortations, invitations than those of the prophets of old had been: how, then, some few earnest and thoughtful souls excepted, should he *not* have been misunderstood, disbelieved, disowned, reviled, scoffed at, nay, put away as something most unwelcome and dangerous and even despised and loathed? — Yet, let us be fair enough to admit that something similar might have come to pass even among a people less distinguished for narrow-mindedness and mean-souledness, for sensuality and equivocation than the Jews were in times of yore, in the age of Jesus, and are in our own days; let us, by way of approximative comparison between the greater and the minor — remember the fate of many heroically *protesting* God-taught men during e. g. the middle ages in their conflicts and, as far as honors and life were concerned, their defeats opposite to the wilful blindness of Popes, Priests, Emperors and Kings and the more or less unwilfully blind rage and error of mis-ruled, sacerdotalism-ridden populaces; nay, we need, indeed, only imagine to ourselves the reputed son of a carpenter, lowly, meek, pure, appearing in this our 19th century in some great and sinful European city, announcing a Jesus-like divine mission, shedding abroad Jesus-like spiritual influences, denouncing formalism as spirit-death and branding hypocrisy as mockery of God, preferring the society of „publicans and sinners“, in whom there is still reverence and conscience left, to that of pharisees and sadducees, i. e. aristo-

crats and philosophers, in whom the heart has been deadened and the mind petrified: would his message not be rejected, his mission denied, his tenets derided, his efficacy checked — by any and every means, whether gentle or violent, that might be got at and made use of? Would his doctrine not also be termed „blasphemy“, or, as we now rather say, *heresy*; would not a „crown of thorns“ await him, or, as we now rather say, excommunication and interdict; would he not be led to the „cross“, or, as we now rather say, the rack and the stake? — *Judicial murder* the death of such self-thinking teachers and unwelcome moralists as the reward for their holy insights and stern admonitions was and remains; and must we not, despite a very different theory on the part of the modern French Jew Salvador and even the modern German Jew Saalschütz,¹⁾ pronounce the death of Jesus, of whom even a Pontius Pilate declared „I am innocent of the blood of this *just* person“ (Matth. 27, 24), nay, of whom Judas Iscariot himself testified „I have sinned in that I have betrayed *innocent* blood“ (ibid. v. 4), also judicial murder? What I have said, I said to account for it, but not to apologize for it; I said it merely by way of comment on Strauss's „the death of Jesus was *historically* conditioned by the relation into which the idea and plan of Jesus stepped to the mind and mood of the Jews of those days and of their leaders.“

But, more than this. If we look into the nature of things, if we ponder Jesus' keen psychological insight into the heart of man in general and into the character of his cotemporary fellow-countrymen in particular, if we listen to the unequivocal testimonies of the gospel-narratives, we cannot but acquire abundant testimony that the victim clearly foresaw, fully foretold his own doom, that Jesus knew that his „but I say“ in opposition to the „ye have heard that it is said“, that his entire position from first to last to all merely political, ceremonial, legally living, though ethically dead, Mosaism, all his addresses to deepest religious consciousness, all his demands upon righteousness of the heart and spiritual devotion, all his warfare upon perverted and worldly Messiahism and depraved and per-

¹⁾ Das Mosaische Recht, nebst den vervollständigenden, talmudisch-rabbinischen Bestimmungen, 2. Auflage, Th. II, pp. 623—626 „der Proceß Jesu.“ Salvador's more complete justification of the legal procedure against Jesus in his Hist. des Institutions de Moïse, liv. IV, ch. 3, and Dupin's refutation of the said justification in his Jésus devant Caïphe et Pilate are known to me only from the accounts given by Carové on pp. 105, 106. of the previously quoted book.

verting Sacerdotalism, upon contracted Jewish nationalism, upon external Jewish monotheism would, of necessity, sooner or later involve the loss of his life, his immolation by violent means from without on the altar of his own devotedness. Yet, he did not, would not, nay, so to speak, by force of his moral nature, even could not become faithless unto himself for the purpose of conciliating his foes, of accommodating himself to existent prejudices, of silencing antagonistic passions, of glossing over manifest corruptions, and thereby of putting a stop to the designs upon his life, and, finally, of averting from himself a shameful and a painful premature death. Because, now, he went to his doom with his eyes wide open to all the causes and all the effects, and with a perfect determination to encounter with resignation what he had voluntarily engendered, he did possess the *power* which he himself ascribes to himself. No decree from on high compelled him; no violence from beneath forced him: in his own unconditional reverence for the Divine, love unto mankind, fidelity and obedience to the injunctions and impulses of his own god-given soul he, with battle-song of triumphant calm and courage sounding from his lips, when he stands alone with his disciples and his God before the face of the menacing cross (vide e. g. John XIV, 30, 31), walks forward — and perishes that the work he had come into the world to perform might be „accomplished“, and he himself „perfected“ through such work. — Something of this kind is, I ween, the key to what Strauss *ubi supra* said: „his death was *morally* conditioned by the purity and strength of his will which forbade him to yield in the combat for recognized truth and the task of his life.“

If, now, upon this ground and for this reason sundry Christians and Jews have emboldened themselves to proclaim the death of Jesus suicidal, we can only marvel at, and mourn over, that obliquity of vision, that confusion of ideas, that perverseness of sentiment which misled them into mistaking *voluntary death* for actual suicide, into mistaking for self-destruction *self-devotion* (vide §. 8), unconditional and absolute devotedness unto Good and unto God and unto Mankind, even unto death, aye, unto death upon a cross! — Regarding in this manner the death of Jesus solely from a human standing-point, it presents itself to us simply as an act of self-sacrifice. Any other mode of viewing it, for instance, in consonance with the orthodox metaphysical notion of his *divine nature*, or, with

the orthodox evangelical notion of his *atoning vicariousness*, would at once place us in a sphere where difficulty and doubt strike wave-like upon difficulty and doubt; where all genuine human estimate of life and death, of volition and foresight ceases to be valid; and on the very boundary of which Ethics must needs turn back, because the very essence of the enquiry lies, as beyond their legitimate range, so likewise beyond their possible reach.

But, enough of the *pro-suicidal* argument evolved from the death of Jesus. More pleasing and edifying as well as more instructive and fruitful for our immediate question it may prove to bestow a moment's attention upon some few devout and energetic words which have ever and anon been penned by christian writers in various ages on the *anti-suicidal* bearing, import, significance of Jesus' death. Some few brief quotations shall suffice. Luther¹⁾ in that epistle of his which bears the inscription „Von Anfechtung wegen Ueberdruß des Lebens und Begierde sich selbst zu entleiben“, and which he addressed anno 1532 to a certain nobleman, Jonas von Stockhausen by name, whom a kind of *taedium vitae* and deep melancholy seem to have been tempting to self-destruction, adduces no arguments against suicide, except the very general one that God is the Lord of Life, but prefers referring his correspondent to the suicide-discouraging examples of *Jesus*, *Elijah*, *Jonah*, &c. Similarly Grotius (in his annott. ad acta Apost. XVI, 28) says. „Christiani majoris patientiæ (by way of contrast to the Jews) debitores et exempla *Christi*, Apostolorumque ejus habentes ob oculos, pro certo semper habuere potius, quamvis mortem expectandam, quam sponte sumendam, nisi (about which clause we shall have to speak a few §§ further on) quod de mulieribus, quarum pudor periclitatur, non nihil dubitatum est.“ In a still more direct and emphatic manner, finally, Mme. de Staël, in her already quoted réflexions sur le suicide, expresses herself thus. „La dernière scène de la vie de Jésus-Christ semble être destinée surtout à confondre ceux qui croient qu'on a le droit de se tuer pour échapper au malheur.“ — Though, now, there existed a more or less considerable difference between the creeds of these three writers, they, doubtless, one and all believed Jesus to have been *more* than a human being in the ordinary and natural sense of this term; but, with and through such belief of theirs,

¹⁾ *Sämmtliche Schriften*, edit. Walch, X4. X, pp. 2050—2053.

whether we modify it so or otherwise, the validity of their argument seems to me to fall to the ground, as far as the said argument was meant to apply to us, i. e. to *mere* human beings: and this for the reason I have above already assigned. That standard which must of necessity be applied to divine nature which is perfect *absolutely*, cannot possibly be used as a measure for human nature which has to strive to *become* so *relatively*. Therefore, only if Jesus was strictly and literally a mere human being like ourselves, and only in as far as he was so, can his deportment under trial be pronounced a fair and full ensample unto us. Viewing him, then, as such, from our unrestrictedly humanitarian standing-point, we would embolden ourselves to say about what follows. Unfold, O reader, unto thyself the gospel-panorama of Jesus' story; behold him emptying lovingly a chalice filled with bitterest draughts; bearing patiently burdens hard and heavy; enduring heroically the utmost of what our mental, moral and physical being can be called upon to suffer! Shall we, then, who call ourselves after his name, acknowledge him as our spiritual leader, believe ourselves summoned to walk in his footsteps, to follow his banner — complain, falter, despair, sink, when a cup less bitter is presented to us, a yoke less hard and heavy placed upon us, when trials less numerous and agonies less keen are apportioned unto us? Yea, it is even thus, as I take it, that Jesus has *practically* become the greatest of all anti-suicidal prototypes unto all deep and deepest souls who have *elected* him their God, as far as they can conceive of God in *human* word and work, who, leaving Priests and Kings, Councils and Courts to make catechisms, fix creeds, prescribe religions, fashion christianities, in holiest reverence and meekest earnestness claim Jesus as their brother-man, and look up to him, aye, in spirit lean upon him, as their sorrow-stricken, but also sorrow-vanquishing, fellow-warrior and „captain of salvation.“ — Yet, ere I close this §, one brief remark more, lest I should seem to have laid too great a stress upon what connects itself with the theme we are treating on. I *cannot* exactly conceive unto myself a *suicidal* Jesus of Nazareth. He stands before me immeasurably too high for even such an imagining. I should as readily picture him unto myself e. g. getting Judas assassinated before the betrayal from caution, or after it from revenge, as slaying himself to escape from all the mockery that preceded, and all the torture that accompanied, his crucifixion. With which

parting confession we with gentlest hand let the curtain drop o'er this divinest of all historic tragedies.

§. 64. THE ONLY PERTINENT NARRATIVES IN THE N. T.

I. The death of Judas Iscariot (Matth. XXVII, 5, and Acts I, 18, 25).

According to the first of these two passages, Judas, after having „cast down the pieces of silver“, departed, i. e. retired unto some solitary spot, and ἀπελθὼν ἀπήγγατο. We have thus in the latter word the same form of the same verb which the LXX — Josephus in the passage I referred to in §. 30 substitutes ἀνηγγισεν αὐτὸν — employ of the death of Achitophel, and in that § as also in §. 49 I have stated and developed such sound and varied *philological* reasons as exist for assuming that the word-form before us must be understood, as well in the case of Judas as in that of Achitophel, literally of self-suspension, or, at least, of self-suffocation, i. e. of killing one's self by contracting the throat, in opposition to dying a natural death. (To the Jewish testimonies I have there adduced I will now add that of Saalschütz, p. 550, of the work quoted in the preceding §; the only mark-worthy things he has put forward are two assertions neither of which I can agree with, viz. whilst conceiving the passage in Job VII, 15 to mean in all probability „schon dachte ich an Erwürgen, an den Tod von eigenen Gliedern, b. h. Händen, doch ich verabscheuete es“, he interprets Job II, 9, 10 into an incitation on the part of Job's wife that he should *bring on his own death by the utterance of a wicked word*: this is the one point; and the other point is that he thinks the law stated by Josephus about leaving suicides unburied until evening *might have really come into use* at a later, i. e. a post-canonical?, period.) As regards, however, the controversies which have been raised on the manner of the death of Judas, ere we enter upon them more minutely, it may be as well to quote e. g. two *English* writers, since I have not often referred to English authorities, who seemed inclined to doubt, as Grotius, vide §. 50, did, whether the Traitor really died by the means which we in that § specified. Sir Thomas Browne, in sect. 22 of his in §. 52 quoted *Religio Medici*, incidentally says. „That Judas perished by hanging himself, there is no certainty in Scripture: though, in one place, it *seems* to affirm it, and, by a *doubtful* word,

bath given occasion to translate it, yet, in another place, in a more punctual description, it makes it improbable, and seems to *overthrow* it." Lightfoot, whom his Rabbinical lore would appear to have occasionally infected with something very like Rabbinical credulity, repeatedly ¹⁾ illustrates, nothing doubting, ἀπῆλθε *passively* to the effect that Judas was throttled by the Devil who had been for three days corporeally seated in him, and, finally, made his exit through the Traitor's bowels. The reader will, I hope, thank me for not troubling him with our learned countryman's *five* reasons for so strange an hypothesis; for I will rather spend a few lines on alluding to sundry almost exact counterparts to it in later Christian story. For instance, according to Eusebius (H. Eccl., V, c. 16) a certain Apollinaris of Hierapolis narrates in connexion with the self-suspension of Montanus and Maximilla which he expressly compares with that of Judas, that Theodotus, one of the first among those who had been carried away by their prophecy, as it was called, and who became a kind of patron of the delusion that he should at some time be taken up and received into the heavens, fell into trances, gave himself up to the spirit of deception, and was, according to general opinion, finally *tossed by him like a quoit in the air*, and thus miserably perished. — Verily, in the world of superstition novelties soon cease to be so, extravagancies quickly repeating themselves; and thus all children have read, in a well-known popular booklet of the middle ages, of the notorious, only semi-fabulous Dr. Johann Faustus, that the Devil appeared to him in the most horrid form, led him off through the air, and flung his crushed limbs down upon a dunghill. —

Nearly a dozen dissertations, known to me, however, only by name, have been penned in the 17th and 18th centuries on the death of Judas. The very title of that by Oldendorp (conj. de Juda Ischariotha in templo ab Judaeis interfecto, Hannov. 1754) puts forth the author's absurd supposition that Judas was assassinated by the Jews in the Temple; and Paulus' epitome (p. 611 of the work quoted in §. 60) of Perizonius' dissertation (de morte Judae et verbo ἀπῆλθε, Leyden, 1702) instructs me that therein the said word is explained of *attacks of melancholy* which are often like *fits of suffocation*, so that Matthew intended to narrate only that Judas went

¹⁾ Works, vol. II, pp. 176, 264, 639.

away and was in, or got into, *great anguish*, i. e. from grief, excitement, agitation of mind, and that under the influence of such melancholy what is narrated in the Acts happened to Judas, inasmuch as Peter or Luke would otherwise not have passed over Judas' self-suspension with silence. (I have purposely left the reader the *choice* between Peter and Luke; for it is a much disputed question, whether verses 18 and 19 in Acts I constitute an integral part of Peter's discourse, or be merely a parenthetical intercalation of Luke's who, not having touched upon the end of Judas in his Gospel, embraced this opportunity for doing so circumstantially. Calvin, for instance, adduces in his Commentary on the Acts three reasons for the latter supposition, and Olshausen in his Commentary takes the same view. One of their reasons is that, since the fate of Judas was universally known at Jerusalem, such a narrative was superfluous, and another of them that, since Peter, doubtless, spoke in Hebrew, the translation of Hakeldama into Greek was most certainly uncalled for. But, on the one hand, this translation of a word in v. 19 might belong to Luke, though the narrative as such does not, and, on the other hand, the γὰρ in v. 20 evidently links itself to v. 19, not to v. 17. However, suchlike questions appear to me of comparatively little importance, inasmuch as we cannot possibly suppose Luke to have given the various apostolic speeches verbatim, but rather only according to their general spirit and import). But to return to Perizonius. His only proofs are *that* passage in Tobit which we have discussed in the previous Section, and Aquila's translation καὶ αἰετταὶ ἀρχοντες τῇ ψυχῇ μου of *that* exclamation of Job's which we have also ibidem analysed. — Enough, therefore, of these preliminary literary notices; more to our purpose it will prove to endeavor to trace the original causes of existent divergent speculations on the manner of Judas' death, and which may be affirmed to lie in two circumstances solely.

1. In the difficulty which many interpreters experienced in reconciling the brief record in Matthew with the more circumstantial narrative in the Acts: „and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.“

Is the divergence here real, or only apparent? After having considered this matter as carefully and closely as I was able to do, my own decided impression, though even de Wette seems to be of opinion that by the account in the Acts that in Matthew touching

Judas' repentance and suicide is rendered *uncertain*,¹⁾ falls in with that of those who think that, whereas Matthew simply narrates the mode of suicide, Peter or Luke, on the contrary, narrates the fate which subsequently befel the corpse of the self-suspended Judas. Nor can I, being under the said impression, see aught even forced in picturing to myself the matter as Paulus — before him Casaubonus, Calixt, and Gerhard had, according to Gratz,²⁾ done similarly — did who, whatever defects or short-comings he may be justly said to have labored under as biblical commentator, possessed an undeniable master-hand in arranging and explaining mere *external* details. He has put forth his theory on this subject more than once, e. g. in his *Commentar über das Neue Testament*, Th. III, p. 506 of the edit. of 1805; but I will extract the *latest* account he has given on p. 457 of the work quoted in §. 60. Thus runs the graphic and even somewhat picturesque description in the original. „Noch im Tode macht ihn seine Verzweiflung zum Gegenstand des Grauens. Er war seiner selbst nicht einmal mächtig genug, um sich sicher den Tod zu geben. Auf irgend einer Höhe (im Zwielicht des halben Bewußtseins scheint er noch sich selbst zu einem in die Augen fallenden Exempel bestimmt zu haben!) hatte er sich an einem Baum aufhängen wollen. Sein Versuch mißlang ihm, wie häufig in der Unbesonnenheit eines solchen Wüthens gegen sich selbst. Er hatte sich nicht sicher genug gebunden. Der Strick oder der Baumast riß. Der Unglückliche stürzte von der Höhe über schroffe Klippen und Gesträuche, die ihn zersplitterten, bis ins Thal hinunter. Man konnte die Hand des höhern Rächers noch an dem entstellten, aufgeschlitzten Leichnam zu sehen glauben.“ — Why I do not agree with what appeared to Calmet the most probable view touching the interference of the Magistracy I have stated already in §. 60. If, however, anybody should prefer imagining that accidental passers-by might have seen Judas suspended, cut the rope, and violently cast the corpse down; or, that, when the body was after the lapse of some time discovered, it had already fearfully swollen by the natural process of putrefaction, and as a matter of course burst asunder, I can only say that to me individually Paulus' conjecture seems the more natural one. — As to Bolte's suggestion (quoted and rejected by Paulus) that *πρωτης ερε-*

¹⁾ Kurzgefaßtes exegetisches Handbuch zum N. T., B. I, p. 231. ²⁾ Kritisch-historischer Comm. über das Evangelium des Matthäus, Th. II, p. 613.

vero might possibly be = ἀπῆλθε, because in Talmudical Hebrew קנף has apparently or occasionally the twofold meaning of being precipitated foremost and of suffocation or self-suspension, it would, even if warranted and adopted, not by any means account for or explain the matter of the bursting asunder &c. Friedreich's hint,¹⁾ however, to the effect that the words „all his bowels gushed out“ must be understood only in a general manner, and almost as it were figuratively, of considerable violent injury, seems to me not improbable, if we compare the passages to which he refers us, viz. 2 Sam. XX, 10, and the narrative of Razis, with which he compares also Homer's similar idiom e. g. Il. IV, 525.

2. In — this is the second circumstance, and itself partly dependent upon the previous one — the whimsical legends which were current already in the early christian church about Judas' having died a more or less natural death.

Ignatius in his epist. ad Philipp., Eusebius in his H. E. 5, 16, and Origenes contra Cels. lib. II (as referred to by Dr. Paulus) believed Judas to have really hanged himself; but Papias already, by many supposed to have been a disciple of St. John's, but also generally affirmed to have been both uncritical and credulous, having in the commencement of the 2nd cent. collected all the traditions about the life of Jesus in 5 books, only fragments of which remain,²⁾ narrates that „Judas walked about as a signal example of impiety on earth. His body swelled to such an extent that he could not get through, when a carriage passed even slowly beside him so that he was crushed by it, his bowels becoming split.“ Oecumenius, a writer of the 10th century, who has preserved this testimony in his Commentary on the Acts, enlarges with the most *disgusting* and unnatural minuteness upon the dropsical state of Judas, and closes by assuring us that he, after having suffered many pains and punishments, died on his own field which up to his time lay waste and uninhabited, since nobody was able even to pass by it without holding his nostrils with his hands. Theophylact, who wrote also in the 10th century, in his Commentary on Matthew manages

¹⁾ Zur Bibel, Th. II, pp. 32, 38 in his brief, and not particularly accurate essay vom Selbstmorde. ²⁾ Vide Schleiermacher's very instructive essay über die Zeugnisse des Papias von unsern beiden ersten Evangelien, in his sämtliche Werke, Abth. I, Bd. II, p. 370 Anm., where also our immediate question is briefly touched upon.

the matter again somewhat differently, inasmuch as he lets Judas attempt to hang himself on a tree, but, the bough having given way, survive the attempt, God wishing him to be reserved either unto repentance, or, unto confusion; and subsequently, being unable to cross the wheel-rut, become run over, ripped open, &c. Euthymius, finally, who composed a commentary on the four gospels in the 12th century, lets Judas be prevented from suicide, thereupon dwell in some solitary spot, and accidentally fall down from some precipitously dangerous place. — Thus, whereas Papias and Oecumenius entirely ignore Judas' suicide, Theophylact and Euthymius endeavor to resolve it into a mere unsuccessful attempt. Consequently, if a figurative meaning of ἀπηγγέστο be inadmissible in Matthew's record, we cannot but imagine, as Paulus suggests, that e. g. Papias read in his edition of the Acts *πρηθείς γενόμενος*, having become *swollen*, instead of *πρηγής γενόμενος*, having fallen *headlong*, or, if you like, *face foremost*, i. e. upon his belly, as Olshausen incidentally proposes. — Au reste, what we said in the previous Section about the deaths of kings may be said to apply in some manner and measure also to those of great criminals. Just abhorrence inclines pious writers to indulge in exciting and terrifying fancies and fables, popular superstition becomes inventive, and an awe-struck imagination can scarcely content itself with an act of ordinary suicide upon which only natural results were attendant. We for our own part, however, should also on *psychological* grounds decide in favor of the simple fact that Judas hanged himself, and this decision imposes upon us the necessity of saying a few words on what we take to be the general character of Judas and his special motive for betraying Jesus.

If Judas was in the O. T. prophesied of as, and by God *decreed* to become, the betrayer of Jesus, we might, perhaps, have to view his character and his action in a somewhat peculiar and specific manner; but we gladly leave suchlike to the cold-blooded sophistries of predestinarians, e. g. Calvin. If Jesus was *omniscient* and consequently from the very outset perfectly aware of the part this disciple of his would inavertibly enact, we should likewise feel compelled to regard as his election of Judas so Judas' betrayal of him in a light more or less strange and startling; but we reasonably shrink from paying too close an attention to some few predictions and maledictions which ever and anon sound like muffled, unearthly tones,

even you „the son of man *must*, yet *woe* unto“ &c. Indeed, that standing-point which we conscientiously occupy not only renders any such extraordinary standard of judgment unnecessary, but even enjoins upon us absolutely to ignore it, so that we have really to deal merely with a phenomenon which, howsoever great and just our horror *moralis* may be, must be accounted for solely upon ordinary human and natural grounds. Believing Jesus to have possessed, by force of his extreme measure of mental and spiritual endowments, an almost unerring knowledge of man (cf. John II, 25), we cannot but take for granted that on the one hand he would not have chosen Judas to be of the privileged twelve, had he not discovered in this same personage certain qualities which fitted him for close contact with the other disciples, for confidential communion with himself, for beneficial connexion with the incipient and crescent new religious community. Almost each of the elected twelve not only was in virtues and foibles proveably different from the other, but manifestly labored under some kind and degree of defectiveness which had to be gradually removed. In the case of Judas *only* such innate and fostered defectiveness would seem to have defied all cure, to have rather grown and hardened itself with years and opportunities. However, the materials are so scanty out of which we should have to build up a characteristic of him that, for instance, Abraham a Sancta Clara's *Judas der Erzschelm*, an attempt of this sort, is a mere series of legends and conceits. We will bestow a moment's attention upon what John (ch. XII) lets him say, and himself says of him, on that touching occasion when you poor woman in her own fashion „hero-worshipped“, and in her own measure brought the „widow's mite“ by laying at the feet of him she prized most on earth what of the most precious she on earth could call her own. Here Judas' remark would seem to betoken a total want of genuine sympathy with a simply beautiful act of disinterested and devoted affection, to indicate a nature in which all the finer, nobler, more delicate feelings had become blunted, if they had ever therein existed. Thence Jesus' displeasure and rebuke. Again, if John inform us in connexion with this very incident that Judas carried the common apostolic purse, we are led to infer therefrom that he was a practical man, who understood pecuniary business well, a thoroughly realistic nature; and the same informant's further remark „that he, nevertheless, did not care for the poor“, places at once before us a

calculating economist, a hard-hearted utilitarian. But, more than this still: this very disciple of love assures us that Judas was "a thief", whereby he must mean that Judas was in the habit of committing petty larceny upon such small treasures as the disciples of Jesus would seem to have had in common. And thus at length Judas stands unmasked and condemned as an avaricious and unprincipled man. Did Jesus now at last know him to be nothing better? Had he previously already discovered him to be nothing better? Had he hoped to reform him gradually, to win him over unto goodness by his own nobleness and holiness? Was he willing to let him remain unto the world as an example of incurable perverseness and obduracy, a proof that on this earth of ours darkness from below ever dwells on the very confines of celestial light? I know not; for the gospel-story does not answer these and other kindred questions unto us; and guesses and surmises cannot avail aught towards solving so difficult a problem. — It is, now, this same matter of Judas' love of dishonest gain which has induced many to believe that the proffered thirty pieces of silver proved to him an irresistible temptation to betray his Master and Friend! Yet, if we consider the extreme smallness of the amount, the mere value of a slave (cf. Exod. XXI, 22, and Zech. XI, 12), whether we compute it as being somewhat more or somewhat less than L. 6, and also take into account the indifference and disgust with which he subsequently flung the said sum from himself, I am loath to suppose that it in and by itself constituted the chief inducement, albeit there are passages in the N. T. (e. g. 1 Tim. VI, 10, and Eph. V, 5) which would seem to lead us to infer that attachment to money is both the vilest and most potent of passions, and although we all know that among the Jews of modern times it appears as the master-passion, howsoever mean and degrading it be. But, the *unqualified* terms in which St. Paul speaks of avarice would appear to me a mistake in moral philosophy, if we were not to allow ourselves to define them according to the principle of *pars pro toto*, i. e. as referring simply to one, and, perhaps, the most common and low, of the manifestations of worldliness, earthiness, selfishness: which incidental suggestion may help us to what I am inclined to view as the truest construction of Judas' motive for his base treachery.

We know that the apostles one and all at first hoped, expected, believed Jesus to intend to establish a temporal Messianic realm,

and that they with short-sighted folly and sensuous eagerness indulged in the prospect of obtaining posts of advantage, honor, power as soon as their period of probation should have expired. Whereas, however, the germs of spiritual fitness and soundness in the other eleven disciples of Jesus had the longer the more developed themselves into accommodation to, assimilation with, appreciation of the spiritual mindedness and divine intentions of their anti-worldly teacher and leader, Judas alone, by closing his inmost soul against all genuine and genial spiritual life and work and plan, remained still obstinately aloof from the real effluences of Jesus' efficacy, wilfully blind to the revelations which the Master gradually made unto his disciples. In him Self was to the end pre-eminent and all-absorbing; in it his love centred, around it his hopes revolved: a worldly Messias for him, or — none, a speedy and unmistakable realization of his earthy dreams, or — an unwelcome and horrible awaking to a clear and full sense of his disappointment. He, therefore, resolved to compel, as it were, by a coup de main, de force, d'état the spiritual Messiah out of what he, probably, took to be a merely temporary and preliminary state and stage into an assumption and a manifestation of earthly might and glory, to betray, if we may thus express ourselves, the spiritual Messiah unto the temporal Messiah, to effect that which „the tempter in the Wilderness“ had suggested. Even the strongest epithets applied to Judas in the gospel-narratives, e. g. „a Devil“ (John VI, 70), „Satan entered into him“ (Luke XXII, 3), seem to me perfectly explicable on this ground, and not to necessitate any more fearful interpretation; for in the N. T. the *κοσμος*, the World, the Self, the Carnal, if existent in unconquered form, in unconquerable force, are terms and notions kindred and convertible with the Diabolic and Satanic. Thus, then, we should say that, since the gospel-narratives themselves do not assign any *specific* motive for Judas' act of treachery, neither avarice, nor insulted vanity, nor vindictive malice, neither the thirty pieces of silver, nor the rebuke in John XII, nor the implications in John VI, we cannot but deem ourselves perfectly at liberty to affirm that impatience, selfishness, curiosity, false hopes and self-deception in covenant with the energy, callousness, avarice of his natural character all concurred to mislead Judas into giving Jesus the fatal, final kiss which delivered him inextricably over into the power of his inexorable foes, and caused

him to fall and perish terrestrially who was neither willed nor destined terrestrially to sway and triumph.

When, however, Judas saw that yon kiss of his would unavoidably prove the means of elevating Jesus upon a cross, a malefactor on each side, instead of raising him upon a throne, surrounded by the twelve disciples, he was astonished and disappointed, instead of taking it as a natural result, as a matter foreseen, expected, natural and necessary; shame and self-contempt, instead of such satisfaction and exultation as would have resulted from deep-rooted malice and utter hardness of heart, seized upon him with most potent grasp; and in such despair and desperation as proved him not to have been utterly depraved and absolutely lost to all moral consciousness, he hied himself away from the sight of man and from the scene of trial by that one-sided, mistaken, precipitate, blind sort of atonement which similarly organized and baffled great criminals, who would fain have won the battles of the Spirit with the weapons of the Flesh, in their short-sightedness and excitement are often led to offer unto God, unto themselves, and unto the violated moral world. „Seine schwache Reue war bloß der Schreck vor den Folgen seiner That, aus ihr konnte daher auch nur Verzweiflung hervorgehen. Die Reue über die That, obgleich ein furchtbares Zeugniß seines Unglaubens (denn hätte er die Liebe in Christo auch nur geahnet, so würde er in ihre Arme gesunken sein), beweist doch klar, daß sein edleres Selbst noch zu erschrecken fähig war; und sein Selbstmord, die neue Sünde, welche die erste gebor, spricht doch die Entfernung von roher Gemeinheit aus, welche sich mit ruhigem Genuß des Gestohlenen hätte genügen lassen. Gemeine Menschen werden kleine Bösewichter, wenn sie sich der Macht der Finsterniß ergeben; große Charaktere werden große Bösewichter, wenn sie die Sünde in sich herrschen lassen.“ These beautifully profound words are portions of the late deep-minded and gentle-hearted Olshausen's verdict ¹⁾ on Judas' suicide as such, though he was strongly opposed (but his arguments have appeared to me somewhat confused, and they at all events have not convinced me) to that view, advocated by e. g. Dr. Paulus ²⁾ and Prof. Ewald, ³⁾ of Judas' motive for betraying Jesus, which we have in our own way endeavored to pursue and develop, albeit *only*

¹⁾ Kommentar, B. II, p. 461 of Aufl. 2. ²⁾ pp. 451—458 of the work previously quoted. ³⁾ Die drei ersten Evangelien, 1850, p. 344. Other earlier expositors in this direction are specified by Hase in his Leben Jesu, p. 232, Anm. 7 in edit. 2; but I have not consulted their writings on this topic.

as briefly as possible: else, sundry points ought to have been, if not dwelt upon, yet alluded to. For instance. Whereas John's narrative (XII, 1—8) of the anointment of the feet of Jesus by Mary at Bethany allows us to cast a deep glance into the veritable character of Judas, the other evangelists, whilst narrating the same occurrence, do not let it in the least either characterize or compromise Judas individually. Matthew (XXVI, 6—13) e. g. places the objection on the lips of „the disciples“ as a body, and Mark (XIV, 3—9) on the lips of „some“ of the disciples, without mentioning any names. Both of them, doubtless, recount the *same* event as John, and even each of them in the immediately following verse commences to speak of Judas' final treacherous deed. Whether, however, Luke also (VII, 36—50) refer to the *identical* occurrence, I am not prepared to say, and am inclined to doubt very much. Again. By way of illustrating Jesus' extremely clear and correct insight into human character, and more especially into the characters of those in his immediate environment, we might compare his foreseeing and foretelling of Peter's denial of him with his foreseeing and foretelling of Judas' betrayal of him; nay, for the purpose of getting still nearer the peculiar nature of Judas, we might institute a parallel between the said denial and the said betrayal, and analyze the effects each of these acts had upon the individual actor, &c. &c.

Origenes and Theophylactus (as quoted by Calmet) suggest that Judas, seeing that Jesus was condemned, and that he would not be able to obtain pardon from him in this life (but, why not?), made all haste to get the start of him so as to be in waiting for him in the other world, and beg mercy of him there! We may, perchance, experience some difficulty in making up our minds, whether more to admire what is touching and sublime in this vagary, or more to wonder at the almost puerile naïveté which excogitated, without any reason whatsoever, the said motive. It is, we may say, most pathetic poetry, and as such does not stand quite alone in ancient or modern literature. For instance. Wieland (in Buch II of his *Aristipp*, quoted in Sect. I) lets Kleombrotos kill himself from remorse at having, ungratefully and recklessly, been absent from the death-bed of his teacher Sokrates, and for the express purpose of „seeking the deceased in Hades, in Elysium, in the invisible world of spirits, wheresoever he may be, and lying at his feet, until he, Kleombrotos, shall be forgiven by him“; and in a long note (*ibid.* pp. 299, 300)

our author *defends* this same strange hypothesis, annotating by the way that he is not certain, whether the Phaëdo be meant by the writing of Plato on the soul, or, whether the ἄξιον κ. τ. λ. — κακὸν in Kallimachus be fact or supposition (vide, however, §. 24). And Prof. Hermann in his critique on Baumhauer's dissertation, as mentioned in our third introductory Chapter, quotes from p. 55 of the Platon. Prosopogr. of a certain Dutchman, Groen van Prinsterer, the following words: fortasse verba modo allata, viz. Plato's commemoration of the absence of Kleombrotus, ingrati animi testimonium semipiternum, aculei dolore egerunt Cleombrotum ad mortem; posteri autem, sive ita existimantes, sive ut epigramma in disputationis Platonicae efficacitatem scriberetur, causam facti ex vitae felicioris cupiditate repetiverunt", — and himself sides with a view not altogether dissimilar from the one vindicated by Wieland. Or, we might allow ourselves to be reminded of yon *sentimental* Devil in Klopstock's Messiah, the Seraph Abdiel Abbadona, whose ultimate salvation or rejection the maidens and matrons, the parsons and clubs in Germany some fifty and odd years ago, when religious controversy and Klopstockish poetry were all the rage, seriously debated. — Waiving, however, the above gratuitous patristic assumption which might also be interpreted into a mere meanest speculation of genuine Jewish selfishness and subtlety, we would by much prefer the more natural and rational dictum of e. g. the churchfather Augustinus (de civit. Dei, lib. I, c. 17): „we abhor the suicide of Judas, because he thereby cut off from himself room for repentance, despairing of that mercy for which all genuine repentance hopes.“ And I expressly quoted these words, because they are the text upon which very many passages in the corpus juris canonici are modelled, e. g. the following one which (in de util. Poenit., T. I, p. 1072) is ascribed to P. Leo: „sceleratior omnibus, o Juda, et infelicioꝝ extitisti, quem non poenitentia duxit ad Dominum, sed Desperatio traxit ad laqueum“; and because, as far as I have been able to discover, the Canon Law does not affirm more than this, so that Voltaire (as quoted in §. 18) uttered a falsehood, when he asserted that it declared (viz. under the heading de Poenitentia) Judas to have committed a greater sin by hanging himself than by betraying Jesus. No, the argument in the Canon Law is simply thus: Judas did not repent, proved his impenitence by his suicide, and conscious and wilful suicide in general is so damning a sin just because it itself cannot be repented

of, so that Judas' salvation was finally forfeited not by the betrayal of Jesus, but by his despairing of Jesus' mercy, such despair being evidenced by his self-suspension.

We now return to the biblical account, and put the question which is the chief end of our enquiry: what *moral* verdict does the N. T. pronounce upon the self-inflicted death of Judas?

Some modern writers, e. g. Daub¹⁾ and Baumgarten-Crusius²⁾ were, perhaps, not altogether wrong, when they surmised that in the detailed descriptive statement ἐλάλησεν — αὐτοῦ disapproval of suicide is intimated. Only, I should prefer restricting such disapproval to Judas' special case, and not extending it, as Daub has done, to suicide in general; moreover, this writer's further remark that, since this deed is represented as a consequence of the betrayal, Judas' suicide was as certainly a crime as the betrayal was one, is scarcely much to the point. The sequence of a bad act is not necessarily and always also bad. Better is the latter author's hint: that the anti-suicidal signification seems to lie only in the designedly putting forth of the end of Judas in the above manner. Thus, for instance, by way of illustration, I may direct the reader's attention to a statement which is to be found in Zozomen (H. E. lib. II, c. 30). The churchfather Athanasius in his account of the sudden and somewhat mysterious, but quite natural, death of his antagonist Arius, employs the terms „he bent forwards and burst in the middle“ evidently for the purpose of implying a divine visitation upon the so-called arch-heretic. This, however, was malicious, artful, heartless, if we look at the matter aright. — —

But, at all events, of far greater moment for our specific enquiry are the words of Peter „that he might go to his own place:“ words apparently so simple, yet at the same time also so misty that ignorance and ingenuity in the shape of exegesis have vied with each other in making experiments, both exceedingly sharp-witted and almost incomprehensibly trashy ones. It lies somewhat near to think of paraphrasing ὁ ἴδιος τόπος by *Hell*, as Lightfoot (ubi supra p. 640) did, or, of identifying it with what Josephus calls ὁ ἀγῆς σκοτεινός, as Ammon³⁾ has done. But, as I imagine, we should seek in vain for aught resembling satisfactory proof of these expositions.

¹⁾ Vorlesungen, herausgegeben von Marheineke und Dittenberger, B. V, Abth. I, p. 43. ²⁾ Lehrbuch der christlichen Sittenlehre, 1826, p. 287. ³⁾ In his Handbuch der christlichen Sittenlehre, B. II, Abth. 2, p. 22 ff.

Far better, therefore, as I conceive — to pass over in silence merely absurd suggestions —, is what Grotius with short and bold words advances in his already quoted *Annotiones*. „Significatur eventus scelera ipsius justo Dei judicio consequutus. Proprium, id est, qui ipsi melius conveniebat, quam Apostolica functio. Manuscriptus ille quem dixi, habet εἰς (τὸν τόπον) τὸν δίκαιον, non male.“ Which same δίκαιον of Cod. A also de Wette¹⁾ calls „ein gutes Interpretament.“ Indeed, if I be not very much mistaken, the only meaning which the words at issue can here have is this: that place which, because suitable to or proper for him, is, therefore, provided for, and allotted unto, him; and e. g. it is in this very sense that Ignatius,²⁾ when speaking of the dead, says: ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον πέλλει χωρεῖν, thus putting the matter as self-understood, so that no judicial by-notion could be intended to be conveyed.

If it, then, be thus, our Apostle, otherwise so violent and decided, here fixes nothing, augurs nothing about the future destiny of him who „fell by transgression from the ministry and apostleship“, and fell — by his own hand. The phrase under mention is a euphemism or *μειλιγμα* so gentle as not to embody any verdict whatsoever on the ultimate fate of Judas beyond the grave; a mode of dismissing him which is not contemptuous, much less condemnatory, but only solemn, and somewhat sad, as if Peter had said: he has gone to the spirit-land to be placed in the condition due to him, or, he has gone to the prison-house of the dead to be judged in due season. — Nevertheless, when we bear in mind Jesus' own „woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born“ (Matth. XXVI, 24), it does not seem to me exactly unwarrantable, when clergymen for their mainly practical ends prefer attaching to the words under consideration a more gloomy and mysterious power, calculated to render them a sort of spectral warning-voice against self-slaughter. Thus, for instance, F. W. Krummacker, when, in one of his extremely eloquent and earnest, but equally fantastic and vehement, discourses, enumerating various God-forsaken persons and their everlasting doom in Hell, gives utterance to the following rhapsody.³⁾ „The one is during his life given up to the Devil, and we see him,

¹⁾ Kurze gefasste Erklärung der Apostelgeschichten, pp. 12, 13. ²⁾ Epist. ad Magn. c. 5. ³⁾ Ullas der Apostel, p. 238.

perhaps, overcome by despair, arm his impious hand against himself. Alas, an evil, impenitent death, as final stone of temporal punishments, in its turn forms the first ring of *a new chain of horrors which will not terminate in any grave*. The ban-beladen go with Judas to their place, and on earth their names are no longer mentioned, or, they are mentioned with detestation; on earth their places are known no more, or, they are hastened past with horror."

II. The contemplated suicide of the gaoler of Philippi (Acts XVI, 27, 28).

If, then, as we believe to have made clear, neither Matthew nor Peter nor Luke have embraced the opportunity which in connexion with Judas offered itself to them of uttering a distinct and decisive opinion on the sinfulness of suicide, likewise, as we shall now briefly show, Paul did not take advantage of a fit occasion for speaking about and against suicide. The present incident in the life of the great apostle of the Gentiles chanced to occur in a city which may be said to have become immortalized more than almost any other in the annals of self-slaughter; for it was here that, about a century previously, Brutus and Cassius, after the banner of the Roman Republic had been torn out of their blood-stained hands, had sought liberty in the everlasting rest of the wintry tomb.

First of all, we must inspect the jailer's motive for attempting his own life, and this is not difficult to get at. According to the Roman laws, a gaoler or turnkey who had allowed a prisoner to escape was condemned to suffer the very punishment which would have been inflicted upon the latter, had he remained in the power of justice; and this punishment would have been, in the case before us, death by the executioner's hand. (Vide the legal reference in Grotius ad h. l., and cf. as a parallel instance the agitation and apprehensions of the wardens of Peter, Acts XII, 18, 19.) Therefore, the jailer before us feared some harder mode of death than by his own hand, if he did not dispatch himself. Inasmuch, however, as Paul could with verity say „we are all here“, the contemplated self-destruction would have been absolutely objectless, and, inasmuch as Paul did forthwith give him this assurance, it was natural that the affrighted jailer omitted to execute a design which had thereby become perfectly uncalled-for. It is only reasonable to suppose that Paul abhorred suicide; but we should, nevertheless, be mistaken, if we were to seek in the form *μηδὲν πράτης σεαυτῷ κακόν* in which

he couched his interference on this occasion, any allusion to the sinfulness of self-slaughter; for the word *κακόν* in and by itself in this context evidently has a physical, not a moral, signification. Indeed, I could easily cite more than one passage, e. g. from Euripides, in which *κακόν* is expressly employed in exactly the same manner, i. e. as a euphemism for suicide, referring to it as an act of *physical* violence only; and the English version rightly renders it by „harm“, not by iniquity, and Luther by *Uebels*, not by *Böses*, but *Leid* or *Leibes* would, perhaps, have been still more appropriate, according to the present German idiom at least. Thus e. g. Schiller renders Shakspeare's „remove from her the means of all annoyance“ (*Macbeth* V, 1) by „*nehmet Alles weg, womit sie sich ein Leides thun könnten*“, in reference to Lady Macbeth's supposed likelihood of destroying herself. — Moreover, if Paul had meant this apostrophe of his to convey aught like religious dehortation, he would, doubtless, have added e. g. „for suicide is a crime, a sin“, &c., or some similar denunciation, or qualification, of self-destruction from the standing-point of christian ethics; whereas his *γὰρ* is followed up simply by the statement of the fact that he and Silas as well as all the other captives are still there, i. e. by the assignment of a solely *external* reason.

Consequently, we cannot regard the said short, simple, practical address as embodying in any degree an anti-suicidal sentiment, though we may and must regard it as an emanation of human nobleness and manly sympathy, as an evidence of Paul's presence of mind and instinctive sagacity, and, finally, as a proof that far from him was even every thought of a cowardly and illegal taking advantage of that means of escape which the jailer's actual suicide would have, doubtless, afforded to him.

§. 65. PRESUMED DIRECT SUICIDE-DENOUNCING DICTA IN THE N. T.

I. „But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men“ (*Matth.* XII, 31).

An anonymous German writer towards the close of the last century¹⁾ undertook to proclaim suicide the sin here alluded to, even

¹⁾ *Das graue Ungeheur, von Wehrhlin, 1785, B. IV, pp. 14, 15, with which cf. the editor, Wehrhlin's, own remarks ibid. pp. 15—23.*

the reviling of the Spirit. „Wäre ich ein Theolog, so würde ich mir angelegen sein lassen, zu beweisen, daß der Selbstmord einerlei sei mit demjenigen unvergeßlichen Laster, welches die Schrift die Sünde wider den heiligen Geist nennt.“ These are his own words. It is true, the said wiseacre has certain misgivings as to whether this exposition of the passage before us which he interprets with singular brevity and a sort of nonchalance, be *quite correct*; but he consoles himself on this point by maintaining that, though it should not be so, the propagation of it would yet, undoubtedly, prove *at least useful*. „Gesezt auch, diese Meinung wäre an sich nicht ganz richtig: so würde es doch gewiß dem gemeinen Besten verträglich sein, dieselbige gäng und gäbe zu machen.“ Wekhrlin himself, however, seriously inclines to consider the above interpretation *very probably* just and tenable, and in support of this view of his he adduces sundry reasons which I need not trouble myself to transcribe, since they would scarcely tend either to convince or to edify the reader, but which he himself concludes by lamenting that in his day orthodox faith in the Bible had become so rare a thing that, perhaps, even the adoption and promulgation of the said sapient interpretation would not avail much. — We, for our own part, proceed to observe what follows.

What the nameless sin under mention really is, I will not take upon myself to decide. One might, indeed, incline to believe that Jesus himself and his disciples would scarcely have cast over it so impenetrable and irremovable a veil of solemn mystery and delicate silence, if any great importance, theoretical or practical, could attach to our being able to point to it with positive certainty, and say: lo! it is this, or lo! it is that. Nay, not a few tenderly organized and scrupulously anxious souls will, perhaps, sincerely agree with the Monk in Lessing's celebrated didactic drama (*Nathan der Weise*, IV, 7) in „thanking God for not letting us exactly know in what it properly consists.“ At all events, any specific definition must ever prove more or less debateable. However, I may take upon myself to affirm that two theories concerning it, are not of truth; or, at least, I will assign my reasons for believing them not grounded in equity or common sense. Firstly. We are assured by some Divines that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost could be committed only in the days of Jesus, only by his cotemporaries, only by those who denied his Messiahship, and rejected him whilst he wandered in the flesh.

on earth. But, this assertion implies injustice; for, were it true, a manifest hardship and cruelty beset those same coteremporaries: they had not a choicer blessing than we, they stood only the chance of lapsing into a deeper sin. It, moreover, implies an absurdity; for, speaking according to the terminology of orthodoxy itself, howsoever great the crime of denying and rejecting the *incarnate* Christ may have been, surely, it is an equal crime to deny and reject the *risen* and *ascended* Christ, the promulgated spiritual Lord and Saviour of our race. What *was* divine in Jesus *remains* so equally unto all eternity, and to deny and reject that divine principle in him, that divine mission of his, must be equally a crime now and for ever, aye, even though a Greater than he should sooner or later sojourn among the children of men. Mark, also, in this respect Jesus' own express declaration: „whosoever speaketh a word against the *Son of Man*, it shall be forgiven him, but —.“ Secondly. Nor can I persuade myself to believe that the blasphemy of the Spirit consists in any *individual act* whatsoever, so that it is immaterial at which one we may guess, on which one we may fix. Or, is it not a shallow and low view of life, ethics, religion, God, if we imagine that the everlasting destiny, the unalterable doom of an immortal soul are, as it were, circumscribed and circumvented by any one action as such, since no individual action as such can fully and permanently express and define the entire and unalterable character of a human being? If, namely, the *state* of the soul have but remained such as to be capable of admitting clear insight into sin and sincerest sorrow for sin, any and every action as such must, it seems to me, admit of repentance and expiation, and, therefore, of forgiveness from God, reconciliation with Him. Therefore, I would fain understand the blasphemy of the Spirit as synonymous with what is both in the N. and the O. T. designated and described as „hardness of heart“, i. e. wilful and wanton opposition to, obstinate and obdurate rebellion against, whatever is True, Good, Beautiful in God, Man, Nature, an opposition and rebellion which gradually have become finally unconscious and, thence, incurable, and which instigate, nay, as it were, compel the sinner to sin on, i. e. to sink ever into still deeper depths and still denser darkness, to distrust and scorn whatsoever *spiritual influences* are shed abroad in the world of the Divine on this as on yonder side of death and the grave. For, we may incidentally observe, what Jesus adds in v. 32

„neither in this world, neither in the world to come“, does not by any means supply a new thought, but merely renders the same thought more emphatic, inasmuch as responsible and self-determining man must be supposed to carry as his Heaven so his Hell already on earth in his own breast, and carry them therein too along with himself elsewhither, as far as Life can exist, as long as Eternity can dure. Thus, likewise the Heathen,¹⁾ doubtless, may in their measure „speak against the Holy Ghost“, and Festus' „Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad“, or Pilate's „what is Truth?“ are at least fully as fit exemplifications of the blasphemy of the Spirit as yon mockery on the part of the Jews on the day of Pentecost „these men are full of new wine“ (vide Acts 26, 24; John 18, 38; Acts 2, 13). — I am aware that in saying all this, I have said nothing at all that would not quickly suggest itself to every thinking person; but in our country there are now-a-days so many people who, whether from love of remaining at peace with parsons and bigots or in the feeling of their own inaptitude for earnest reflection on religious truths, are so fond of fixing in their memories as settled results any stereotyped theological opinion, howsoever preposterous it may be, that even the most simple hints which provoke combat are more useful than such dignified silence as leaves a foolishly concluded peace at rest as a fait accompli.

But, to return to the interpretation from which we started. Our anonymous author's belief and affirmation that Scripture itself might be misinterpreted or interpreted at random, on even so grave an occasion as the one before us, if there were but some bare chance that thereby suicide might be diminished or prevented, are almost on a par with the detestable and pernicious Jesuitical principle and practice of „the means being justified by the end“, and, if carried fully out, would seem to me to stand in far closer relationship to the „blasphemy of the Spirit“ than suicide itself does. Which one indignant and contemptuous remark would be sufficient, if the reader might not be supposed here to expect that we should assign some few reasons why suicide really *cannot* be meant by the sin under mention. 1. Inasmuch as suicide is the *last* act of him who is to

¹⁾ Cf. de Wette's popular little treatise: *Die Sünde wider den heiligen Geist, eine biblische Beleuchtung*, 1819.

be judged, the utterance of his *last* confession, the enacting of his *last* conviction, the self-issued pass-port, as it were, with which he seeks admission at the universal portal of the great hall of everlasting justice, — how can the words „will not be forgiven either in this world“ be said to apply to it, i. e. how *can* it be forgiven in *this* world? 2. And, if this be a reason at all, sundry other equally cogent ones would without difficulty present themselves, if it were really worth while to adduce them; but, upon second thoughts, they are either contained in the previous general reflections, or will occur to us in such annotations as we shall make on the very next passage. Why should we, then, trouble the reader or ourselves with 2, 3, 4? Surely, speaking against the spirit of God would be in and by itself anything but a graphic designation of acting against one's own human body; and, inasmuch as there is not even the smallest discernible feature in the entire portraiture of the sin under mention which would warrant us in identifying it with physical self-destruction, we had better cease to meditate antitheses to what is after all no rational thesis at all.

II. „There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it“ (1 John V, 16).

It is, perhaps, less unnatural that this passage should have had a reference to suicide imparted to it than that the previously discussed one should have experienced the peculiar hermeneutic fate upon which we have just been dwelling; for, not only did some of the ancient commentators and scholiasts declare¹⁾ the sin unto death to be (as we also believe it really to be) identical with the blasphemy against the holy spirit (τινὲς δὲ ἁμαρτίαν πρὸς θάνατον τὴν εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα βλασφημίαν φασί, κ. τ. λ.), and adduce Judas Iscariot (which illustration appears also to us an exceedingly apt one) as an example of it (ἦν καὶ Ἰούδας νοσήσας τῷ αἰωνίῳ ὑπήχθη θανάτῳ, κ. τ. λ.), but the very expression „unto death“ was itself not unlikely to induce the one or the other expositor to surmise, albeit overhastily and unwarrantably, that some sin might be meant which actually involved *physical* death (as, indeed, doubtless the mere expression in and by itself primarily alluded to such a transgression as was visited by *capital* punishment). Thence, Crusius in that work

¹⁾ Vide Lücke's *Commentar über die Briefe des Evangelisten Johannes*, edit. 2, 1836, p. 311, Anmerkungen 1 and 2, and cf. *ibid.* pp. 306—317.

of his from which I have quoted in §. 8 really intimates that John here hinted, or, at least, might have hinted, at self-destruction; however, not having the said work now again to refer to, I cannot at this moment be positive about the reasons by which this renowned old orthodox theologian would fain support his interpretation, and will, therefore, at once proceed to make some few merely *negative* observations which appear to me sufficient to do away with either the probability or the possibility of any such bearing of our passage.

What St. John here solely aims at is, not to demonstrate the veritable existence of any particular sin, or to delineate the features of any particular sin, but rather merely, assuming that these matters were fully known to those he addressed (perhaps in consequence of *oral* instructions of his delivered on some previous occasions), to base on this their presumed knowledge the additional counsel or opinion that all and every intercessory prayer for the said sin would be inadvisable, because it would remain unavailing, since it (the said sin or, rather, *sins* or *sinfulness*; for ἀμαρτία is not necessarily *a* sin, as our authorized version renders it, i. e. some *one* individual sin) must be deemed inevitably to involve, according to God's will, i. e. according to the holy and just economy which unconditionally prevails in the realm of the Divine, the loss of eternal life. Thence, now, almost any and every other sin might sooner be thought of than suicide; for, inasmuch as the suicide has *already* by the very commission of the sin itself, *gone to his doom*, nobody would, even without John's special admonition, undertake to „pray for“ this sin of his, unless we should allow ourselves to think of the rite and practice of offering up so-called „oblations“ or „masses“ for the souls and salvation of the deceased, a practice too superstitious and dangerous, I ween, for our Evangelist to have even indirectly countenanced, and also a practice too specifically Catholic for the Protestant Crusius to have here borne in mind. Moreover, the previous clause „if any man see *his brother* sin“ &c., would appear to represent the sin under mention as occurring among the *Christians*, nay, almost to limit it to them. However, we have surely no data for supposing suicide to have been a likely event among the *earliest* Christians, but rather every reason for believing the very opposite, though it was so frequent an occurrence exactly among the *non-Christians*. The context, therefore, appears to me to exclude necessarily the allusion to suicide, not to say anything about

the circumstance that our Apostle of „Love“ would, as it seems to us, have proved himself deficient in genuine *christian charity*, had he designed to insinuate that the sin of compassing our own physical death was the sin which inavertibly consigns to the doom of spiritual death. At least, such a verdict would confuse and perplex us, and would, as I take it, have confused and perplexed his contemporary readers and disciples likewise.

Our humble controversy against Crusius being thus ended, I will merely state that no observant and sharp-sighted christian can fail to be aware that there are souls whose perdition seems hopelessly sealed by their apathy, their playing with the Divine, their utter hollowness and thorough rottenness. In our present world-order, they seem absolutely lost; for they are rootless plants, which must perish, despite all seeming to the contrary. We may define this state of theirs as incapability of repentance, or, as insusceptibility of regeneration, or, as impossibility of revival: call it what you like; the mere name is of no importance, nor need we endeavor to make clear to ourselves, I ween, every item that stands written in e. g. Hebr. VI, 2—8; but yon „it is impossible“ is somehow legibly written on their brow, — and prayerlessly the discerning, „critical“ christian leaves them to — God's Eternity. —

III. „For no man ever yet hated his own flesh“ (Eph. V, 20).

The old French Calvinist Daneau, whilst arguing against suicide, adduces ¹⁾ this passage only from the New Testament; it is, however, difficult to say what amount of argumentative stress he meant exactly to lay upon it, since his own words run merely thus: „at quando nemo carnem suam odio habet, certe naturae ipsi humanae injurius est, qui in se quacunq[ue] ratione saevit.“ But, though no modern commentator on the epistle of the Ephesians, to whose pages I have expressly turned, viz. Harless, Matthies, Flatt, Holzhausen, Meier, Rückert, Olshausen, has even so much as alluded to its anti-suicidal bearing, other writers have found in it some kindred applicability. Thus e. g. Schubert, when discussing Insanity (in his already quoted *Geschichte der Seele*, §. 27, p. 405 of edit. 2), says incidentally: „gleich dem Selbstmörder, der das eigne Fleisch auf unnatürliche Weise hasset und umbringt“ u. s. w., with palpable allusion to our passage; and sundry moralists have conceived and defined

¹⁾ *Ethices Christianae*, 1588, lib. II, c. 13, p. 180.

suicide as *self-hatred*, e. g. Mendelssohn in his *Briefe über die Empfindungen* (vide §. 58).

Speaking, however, first of all quite in general, suicide is not by any means always and necessarily reducible to what we might incline to understand by self-hatred. If, for instance, we keep to the *usual* i. e. the lower *biblical* sense of *καρξ*, self, suicide might be more legitimately viewed as ordinarily a fruit of *self-love*, or, of the love of the world, i. e. (1 John II, 16) „of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life“, of exaggerated or overweening attachment to physical well-being, to carnal comfort, of a precipitate or calculating desire and design to put a speedy and sure termination to really pressureful or imaginarily insupportable sufferings, grievances, temporal and carnal discomforts of one kind or another. And, indeed, only by playing over the word „self“ into a *biblically unusual* acceptation, i. e. a highest and noblest purport, that of the deep and deepest spiritual nature and eternal destiny of man, can suicide be fitly designated as self-hatred, i. e. as a consequence of thorough disrelish of, and determined warfare against, that higher and highest purification and perfectionation by means of sorrow and trial, for which our proper self was indubitably created and in which it would find, and ought to seek, its veritable essentiality. — Suicide, therefore, is equally a manifestation of most intensified sensuous self-love, and an inimical death-blow to all rational and spiritual self-love, so that in one sense e. g. Ugo Foscolo was quite correct, when he let his Jacopo Ortis (vide p. 105 of the work discussed in §. 21), whilst speaking of his intended suicide, write thus. „Ho dunque deliberato: io *non odio* disperatamente *me stesso*; io non odio i viventi. Cerco da gran tempo la pace; e la ragione mi addita sempre la tomba.“ — This little of the two antitheses — hatred of life and love of life; that, however, suicide is often referrible to what apparently stands between them, viz. sheer *indifference* to life, I need not here attempt to elucidate (cf. §. 13).

Passing, however, on to consider our passage specifically, the context most unequivocally teaches that what Paul intends to enforce is the most intimate as well as the most sacred oneness of spouses, more especially as far as woman is concerned, whose lot as that of the „weaker vessel“ christianity, as everybody knows, took upon itself, and most successfully, to raise and brighten. Husband and wife — this is what Paul teaches — are one flesh; a

man's wife is his second ego, is himself, is, as it were, his own flesh and bone, i. e. his own body. Whosoever, therefore, loves his wife, really does no more than love himself, and, as man's inborn self-love not only presupposes desire for self-preservation, but also implies and necessitates even continuous and solicitous care of one's own physical and metaphysical being: so it is unnatural, if a husband, as the „stronger vessel“, far from treating his wife harshly and neglectfully ($\mu\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$, to hate, must scarcely be here understood in the pregnant sense), do not cherish and foster her ($\epsilon\chi\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ and $\theta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ are the opposites of $\mu\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$, and, because of this, the latter verb would seem to have the meaning we have just assigned to it). The entire sentence is, as it were, only a parenthesis, designed to render the precept more self-evidently just and more practically impressive; for the parallel which immediately follows between the conjugal union of man and woman and the spiritual nexus between Christ and the Church, of course, does not here in the least concern us.

We, in conclusion, then make the following few remarks in opposition to the allusion of Danaeus. 1. To define suicide as self-hatred, would be one-sided and equivocal. 2. A prohibition of any sort is not contained in the above remark; and, indeed, a *prohibition* of self-hatred in the abstract, just like vice versâ an exhortation to self-love, would be a thing more or less foolish, because superfluous, and possibly even pernicious. 3. We have before us a mere *assertion* of a fact of history, of a phenomenon of experience, the assertion of such universal instinct and potent impulse as bids man not only preserve, but even love and take care of, his own body and life. But, inasmuch as even also the decidedly pro-suicidal pagan moralist Seneca (vide epist. 14 as quoted by Grotius ad h. l., and cf. also Cicero, de Finibus, lib. V) makes almost the very same assertion, we can not only not discover anything *characteristically* christian about it, but also should not consider ourselves justified in inferring from it that Paul meant to insinuate that suicide would have to be considered as an unnatural action, as a consequence of some moral aberration or mental hallucination; for, in accordance with what we annotated on $\mu\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$, every species of false and exaggerated asceticism might be more readily thought of than actual suicide, and would be more quickly thought of by the Ephesians, if they remembered the annals of their own country, where

very many a man in pagan days really had hated his own flesh so far as to slay himself.

IV. „For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.“ Romans, XIV, 7—9.

J. D. Michaelis, in §. 56 of his *Moral*, quoted already in §. 61, when discussing suicide, mentions only this one passage of the N. T. as having been anti-suicidally interpreted, but without any hesitation rejects the said exposition, nay, dismisses it even with a sort of contemptuous and sarcastic would-be wit. „Just as ridiculous it is too, when one cites Romans XIV, 7—9 against suicide, because then, in sooth, everybody tempted to suicide will answer: I die unto the Lord; for I intend to get to him by death, and I thank him for this termination that I can put to my sufferings, just as in v. 6 for the food.“ What exegetical work or works this eminent scholar was alluding to, I am unable to state, since he does not particularize any, and I have not happened to come across any in which the above interpretation is contained; with certainty, however, I may affirm from my own reading that in none of the best recent commentaries on our epistle, e. g. those by Reiche, Glückler, Köllner, Maier, Philippi, Klee, Flatt, Olshausen, Fritzsche (Tholuck's I have not had an opportunity of consulting on this occasion), is an anti-suicidal drift of our passage even so much as hinted at. Michaelis' editor, however, Stäudlin, in his own likewise already quoted Manual on Moral Philosophy, gives himself some trouble to prove that the above verdict on the part of Michaelis is too positive and off-hand, and strongly inclines to think that an immediate reference to suicide might be discovered in the words under consideration. After which literary notices, I will state my own impression as simply as may be.

Into the various textual and grammatical difficulties which beset the two last of these three verses, we need not enter; for, speaking accurately, only some few words in the whole passage are of importance for our present enquiry. The Apostle is addressing *Christians*, and them *alone* (οὐδελς ἡμῶν), and of these he asserts, including himself, that they one and all, as a matter of course, both live and

die, not unto themselves, but unto the Lord; in other words: that their entire existence, whether in this world or in that to come, all its activities and passivities, its beginning, middle, and end, must have an immediate reference to Christ, stands in closest connexion with Christ, has by Christ been acquired, and will by Christ be judged; that, therefore, to live or to die in any spirit and manner, for any cause or purpose which are un-Christish or anti-Christish would per se be a giving up of the specific characteristics and privileges of membership, communion, oneness with Christ. Everything turns upon the two antithetical datives $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ and $\tau\omega\ \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$, and nobody can possibly doubt for a single moment that, since, as before said, Paul includes himself, the $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$, as *dativus commodi* in a pregnant ethical signification, means: according to the law and impulse of his own arbitrary choice and sensual desire, for his own selfish services and advantages, his own worldly honor and glory; and that, if we scrutinize the matter closely, suicide would not be „that art of dying“ which is here meant by dying $\tau\omega\ \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$, but would rather undeniably, at least in ninety nine cases out of a hundred, come under the head of dying $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$, i. e. from a self-willed motive and in a mood indignant at God's dispensations and visitations. „To live and die unto the Lord“ is also, we may say, to live and die in the spirit in which the Lord himself lived and died. But, as in the previous sense so in this sense, it is far from being an historical fact that all the members of the visible church of Christ do thus live and die; therefore, what the Apostle here expresses *indicatively*, we may reasonably conceive to be intended, as it were, *imperatively*, i. e. to embody a commandment that they *ought* to do so, to contain an intimation that they are veritable followers of Jesus only in as far as they *really* do so; and we again lay stress upon the fact that he *includes himself*. And, what were his own sentiments and deportment in regard to our very topic? Bauer, when discussing circumstantially the biblical moral philosophy of the New Testament, only once alludes to the subject of our enquiry. After having quoted and analysed Gal. VI, 10, Eph. V, 29, 2 Cor. V, 1—9, Phil. I, 21—23, he concludes his comments with the following brief remark.¹⁾ „Although Paul has not mentioned and forbidden suicide by name, he yet, doubtless, did not approve of it beside (bet) such ethical

¹⁾ *Biblische Moral des Neuen Testaments*, 1805, B. II, p. 118.

principles. This is a necessary inference from the passages just now explained." We, for our own part, would rather exclude Eph. V, 29, and substitute for it the passage before us, at the same time, however, not urging so much the wording as the spirit of this very passage; for similar words might be used, as indeed Michaelis (vide the above quotation) hinted, for a directly opposite purpose, nay, have been used, as we learn from a passage in Plutarch's Cleomenes. „Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν αὐθαίρετον θάνατον οὐ φύγην εἶναι πράξεων, ἀλλὰ πράξεν. Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ζῆν μόναις ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν. Fritzsche, to whose Commentary (vol. III, p. 177) I am indebted for this quotation, expressly adds in parenthesis: „hic locus cum nostro verbis quadamtenus convenit, sententiâ discrepat."

The above are the only or at least the chief passages of the N. T. which, in the course of my reading, I have fallen in with as explained into an *immediate* and *explicit* prohibition or denunciation of suicide, and which, therefore, the nature of this Treatise called upon me to examine somewhat closely for the purpose of showing that such ingenuity as explained them thereinto, was more or less misdirected, and therefore miscarried in the attempt. — The reader must, however, not forget that we are now speaking only of direct interdictions and condemnations, not of inferential and implied ones: otherwise, not a few passages might be collected and arranged which would, doubtless, involve much *mediate* significance and importance in relation to anti-suicidal teaching. The endeavor to make them prove *too much* only is of error and folly, and might even tempt and mislead many to overlook and deny what they really *do prove*; for, extremes frequently meet in matters of hermeneutics no less than in matters of character and life. For instance, the *derivative* anti-suicidal force of (besides the passages just quoted from Bauer) e. g. John IX, 4; 1 John III, 15; Romans VIII, 28, as compared with Phil. III, 20, and 2 Cor. V, 15; Romans VI, 21, 23, as compared with Gal. VI, 8 and II, 20; 1 Cor. VI, 18, as compared with III, 17; Tit. II, 12; James I, 15 — would seem to me worthy of all attention, if the intelligent reader will but take the trouble to search out in them that particular word or thought which demands the strongest tone. But, as before said, the stress laid upon them must not be too great, lest cavilers and literalists should feel inclined to strike an opposite note, and thus even gain an *undue apparent* advantage. I will exemplify my meaning by a few words on two of the above

passages. On the one hand, the solemn declaration of Jesus „I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work“, if we pursue the train of thought, and make the natural application to ourselves, would seem to amount to an injunction that every true disciple of Jesus, like the Master himself, stands in the service of the higher Lord, by whom he was sent into this world for the express purpose of fulfilling certain duties imposed upon him, and to the fulfilment of which he must, therefore, apply himself „while it is day“, i. e. as long as life is granted to him, and, therefore, of course, not shorten such day, not hasten „the coming of the night“, i. e. the entrance of death. On the other hand, Paul's circumscription of sin against one's own body „every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body“ might appear to exclude the sinfulness of suicide. The manifest delicacy of the subject induces us to forego entering searchingly upon this extremely difficult passage (even the verb *φθίσκειν* in the parallel passage, III, 17, has, as the marginal note in the authorized version already points out, the double meaning of to *defile*, and to *destroy*) which Church-fathers, Reformers, and modern Theologians have variously interpreted. It may, therefore, suffice to annotate that, when Meyer¹⁾ expressly *excludes suicide*, he does so for a reason which seems to me palpably incorrect, and that Baur's²⁾ manner of rectifying the matter struck me as being far more profound.

But, whatsoever passages may thus be converted into fair game for exegetical erudition and dialectical skill, cannot possibly be of *decisive weight* or *absolute value* in a question of great *practical moment*. For, the N. T. was meant for man as such, for the people at large, and its vital elements were not to be committed to the results either of the disputes of scholars or the decrees of critics, of men who, after eighteen hundred years have elapsed, occasionally still busy themselves to determine, whether that „thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him“, of which St. Paul so touchingly complains (2 Cor. XII, 7), was e. g. *the temptation to suicide!!*, or e. g. mere ear-ache!!! Here, indeed, individual organization and experience may become an influential ingredient in the

¹⁾ *Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament*, Abth. V, p. 136 of the second edit. ²⁾ Vide his and Zeller's *Theologische Jahrbücher*, B. XI, 1852, Heft 4, pp. 540, 541.

work of biblical interpretation, each expositor, since the great apostle has not himself chosen to specify *his* especial hindering and humiliating visitation, being not unlikely to define it according to what is to him, or would be to him, „a thorn in the flesh“; and few there are among us who may not be affirmed to labor under some kind of tribulation, temptation, defect, some kind of spiritual, physical, or nervous infliction which, though even imaginary, reveals itself by „buffetings“ which the purest, noblest, manliest soul may not choose to reveal unto the world.

We, therefore, conclude this § by affirming as our conviction that no exegesis which is guided and guarded by honest principles and impartial accuracy will be able to trace in any *individual* passage of the N. T. a *direct* interdiction of self-slaughter. But, not all persons, howsoever gifted and learned they may otherwise be, possess the humble talent of reading things as they are written, and understanding them as they are meant; and the only pity is that such persons above all others often incline to pride themselves upon a singular measure of genial profundity and critical acuteness, and to view their own *super*-interpretations, *extra*-interpretations, and *contra*-interpretations as so many proofs of the dimness or wrongness of sight on the part of all who cannot subscribe to what has been merely construed *into* this or that passage of the New Testament, as if it had been really construed *out of* it.

§. 66. ASSUMED DIRECT SUICIDE-COUNTENANCING DICTA IN THE N. T.

As little as even the mere uneducated, but attentive, reader of the writings of the N. T. can fail to be aware that neither from the lips of Jesus nor from the pen of any one of his Apostles any such express words have proceeded as e. g. „thou shalt not slay thyself“, „suicide is against the law of God“: so little can he fail to know that likewise no such express words have therefrom proceeded as e. g. „thou shalt or mayst slay thyself“ under such and such circumstances, upon such and such conditions. Therefore, likewise in dealing with the superscription of this §, we are called upon to discuss, not direct and explicit passages, but at the utmost only indirect and implicit ones. As, however, no book under the sun has found so many interpreters as the New Testament, so none

has come in for so many misinterpreters: the reason of which twofold phenomenon is not by any means difficult to discover. Early, later, and latest christians whose theologic system bade them view the said small collection of writings as *verbally inspired*, not unnaturally took for granted that they must shed their divine light over every possible topic of thought and afford their divine guidance in every possible intricacy of life, and, therefore, not only felt disposed to consult this oracle on whatsoever might present itself to them as a question of difficulty, on every case of moment which might occur to them, but also entertained the belief that some clear literal instruction would be by it afforded to them, clear at least to them themselves, the anxious enquirers. And then what happened not infrequently in connexion with the ancient oracles of Greece, came to pass in connexion with the utterances of the New Testament. Responses, though ever so brief or dark, ambiguous or evasive, if they but seemed, albeit only feebly and faintly, to chime in with the interrogator's prepossessions, prejudices, passions, proved unto him perfectly satisfactorily what he desired to have proved; for, we know well, it is never utterly impossible so to train one's spirit-ear as to make it discover our wish and will, our own heart's and head's language echoed in the dialect of presumptive oracles, whether pythic or theologic.

Let us, then, suppose that certain individuals or sects of the christian community were eager to depart voluntarily out of life without overleaping any divinely appointed fence, without transgressing any manifest commandment of Jesus and his Apostles; nay, let us suppose that they were anxious to take such a step not only without regret, but even with a sort of phantastic delight and enthusiastic bravado: would they be very likely to have found it impossible to hunt up some plea or excuse, nay, some sort of presumptive warranty for a notion which appears oblique, and a propensity which appears perverse, to us who approach the question, not to say endowed by nature with a different organism, but certainly placed by the experiences of life upon a different standing-point, and moved by different influences and interests, educational and spiritual, so that our subjectivity is not calculated to do a similar amount of violence to the objectivity of the pertinent passages? Ecclesiastical history shall answer this plain interrogation for us. This time going backwards, we will commence with the *Raskolniks*.

In the Graeco-Russian church, as it has shaped and developed itself in the immense empire of the Czars, there are about five millions of dissenters whom the dominant church calls *Raskolniki*. This Russian term, as explained by Strahl,¹⁾ is compounded of the particle *ras* which, as verb-prefix denoting separation, signifies *asunder* (cf. the German *zer*), of *kolnik*, the *nik* being a mere suffix, formed from the verb *kolotj*, to split, so that *raskol* designates schism, and *raskolnik* an apostate, schismaticus. They themselves, however, declining this odious party-name, call themselves *Starowierzi*, i. e. those of ancient faith, or *Prawoslawnūje*, i. e. those of right faith; but they themselves are also content to be called *Staroobradzi*, i. e. observers of the ancient customs, which appellation the orthodox Russian church has likewise agreed to bestow upon them.

The primary cause of their schism were the changes and reforms which, at the commencement of the second half of the 17th cent., were introduced into the Slavonic versions of the Scriptures and the Liturgical books: changes and reforms, commenced by Nikon, patriarch of Moscow, guided by a council at Moscow, and sanctioned by a council convened by the patriarch of Constantinople, the object of which was to sweep away sundry time-engendered defects, and to bring about general conformity. Violent persecutions on the part of the State tended, as matter of course, only to render the schism more decided, the differences more marked, and additionally to awaken a blind zeal for the crown of martyrdom; under Catharine II, however, the *Raskolniki* obtained, first, 1762, toleration, and then, 1785, liberty. — The said Separatists, now, form among themselves again various sects, most of which are devoid of priesthood or clergy, i. e. though they have buildings in which they assemble for prayer, one of their *unordained* members always officiates therein as priest. These, then, are called *Bespopowschtschina*, which barbarously long word signifies „popeless“ or „priestless“; and one of these sects, again, is called *Pomerani*, i. e. dwellers on the sea, because they inhabit, chiefly at least, the shores of the White Sea, although their members, it being at present one of the most extensive sects, are spread in great numbers not only in Russia, but also in some neighbouring States; for instance, anno 1751 they held in Poland a Synod which

¹⁾ Beiträge zur russischen Kirchengeschichte, 1827, B. I, p. 290, Anm. * Vido also *ibid.* pp. 294, 301—304, 327, 329, 330, 382.

was productive of no fewer than 46 resolutions or articles that exhibit the wildest fanaticism and the coarsest superstition, e. g. they re-baptize all such as have become converted to their creed, conclude and dissolve marriages at pleasure, regard the churches of the State as the houses of Antichrist, confess to one another, give each to himself the Lord's supper, every member constantly carrying about him for the latter purpose a certain sacred dough in an infinitesimal dose, &c. &c. — But, to come to our special point.

Suicide is extremely frequent among them, generally by fire which they call the fire-baptism, regarding the devotees to it as saints, or by fasting, this latter mode being in imitation of Jesus' having fasted forty days. Even, if any individual member should, after a few days, repent of his or her suicidal resolve, they are compelled by the others to put it into execution. Only some few of them, viz. that division who called themselves Andrejewschtschina after a certain Andreas Denisow, declared among their tenets that suicide was unpermitted. — Not to enter too minutely into painful and loathsome particulars, we on one occasion learn that in a certain cloister more than 1000 persons of both sexes burnt themselves to death, on another occasion that elsewhere more than 1700 persons of both sexes purified themselves, as it was called, by the baptism of fire, again that about 1000 burnt themselves to death in barns, forests, houses, stables, after having caused themselves to be therein enclosed by their teachers, nay, that in the territory of Nowgorod some caused themselves to be buried alive: scenes of horror which, though they have in modern times considerably diminished, are still occasionally revived, despite various attempts at instructing and converting the benighted fanatics. — Of course, the said Separatists could not but have openly ceased to be Christians at all, could not, at all events, have been so bold as to assume the epithets of „right-believing“ and „of the ancient faith“, had they not attempted to vindicate their self-slaughterous practices, their opinions on the lawfulness and meritoriousness of suicide by a reference to certain specific passages of the New Testament. Strahl, then, when speaking more particularly of the Philipponen (one of the sub-divisions of these popeless Raskolniki, so called after their teacher Iwan Philippow, I presume) communicates on this point, which, of course, here interests us more particularly, what follows. They maintain: why should it not be permitted unto them to sacrifice their lives

for the Truth? Surely, also many Martyrs had done so by voluntarily rushing into fire or water, or in some other manner not declining the martyr-death. That likewise the great Awwakum writes: „blessed be he who hastens unto the Lord.“ Why should they then not obey this saying of their teacher's? And, finally, also the Apostle Paul says: „we must enter into the kingdom of Heaven through many tribulations“, and the Saviour himself has said: „who kills his soul for my sake, purifies it.“ Through similar misunderstood passages of the N. T. (thus Strahl concludes this portion of his elaborate communications) they have now become so obstinate in their opinion that every attempt at bringing them back from it has hitherto failed. Wiggers, on the contrary, assures us¹⁾ that they rest their pro-suicidal creed upon the following words of Jesus (Mark. VIII, 35—37). „For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?“ The context of which passage induces us to assume that the said Pomerani preached and practised suicide *first of all* in their peculiar situation of a persecuted people, and that *only subsequently* did that become unto them a calmly religious tenet which had been primarily a mere wildly excited impulse.

Overstepping, now, nearly a dozen centuries backwards, we again encounter a christian sect which fancied that it had found a divine warranty for the commission of suicide in a kindred passage of the New Testament. I allude to the Circumcelliones-branch of the Donatists, concerning whom we have already spoken at some little length in §. 63. As regards the O. T., they seem to have considered the case of Razis as a sort of voucher for their suicidal proceedings;²⁾ but, as regards the *New Testament*, they would appear³⁾ to have construed the following words of Jesus (John XII, 25; cf. also Luke XIV, 26 and Matthew X, 29) „he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal“ — into a species of direct summons to suicide under such circumstances as we have detailed in the § just referred

¹⁾ Kirchliche Statistik oder Darstellung der gesammten christlichen Kirche nach ihrem gegenwärtigen äußern und innern Zustande, 1842, 1843, B. I, pp. 228, 229.

²⁾ Vide Augustinus, Opera, T. II, p. 766, 8 in his epist. ad Dulcitium. ³⁾ Ib. T. II, pars I, tract. 51 in Johannis Evangel. c. 12.

to. The fact of this misconception of theirs we learn from Augustinus' most terse and telling refutation of it. „Sed vide ne tibi subrepat ut teipsum velis interimere; sic intelligendo quod debes odiasse in hoc mundo animam tuam. Hinc enim quidam maligni atque perversi, et in se ipsis crudeliores et sceleratiores homicidae, flammis se donant, aquis praefocant, praecipitio collidunt, at pereunt. Hoc Christus non docuit, immo etiam diabolo praecipitium suggerenti respondit (Ang. here quotes Matth. IV, 7: a point which we fully discussed in §. 63). Petro autem dixit (Ang. here quotes John XXI, 18: which passage, however, seems to us singularly irrelevant in this nexus, despite the explanation which our churchfather immediately adds: ubi satis expressit, non a seipso, sed ab alio debere occidi, qui vestigia sequitur Christi). Cum ergo causae articulos vernerit, ut haec conditio proponatur, aut faciendum, ipse contra Dei praeceptum, aut ex hac vita emigrandum, quorum duorum homo cogatur alterum eligere, comminante mortem persecutore: ibi eligat Deo dilecto emori, quam offenso vivere; ibi oderit in hoc mundo animam suam, ut in vitam aeternam custodiat eam.“ — Which matter, if we would see it aright and fully, calls upon us to cast a quick, but steady, glance at the often-discussed and variously judged-of subject of martyrdom, especially as far as it may and must be said to have been more or less misconceived and misapplied by very many of the early christians, teachers as well as lay-men.

Looking for one moment entirely away from either the well-known predictions of Jesus or the indisputable facts of primitive ecclesiastical story, we would fain survey with our „mind's eye“ the mental tendencies and moral elements which, more or less manifestly and operatively, characterised and pervaded the vast Roman Empire during the first century of our aera and the two succeeding centuries likewise, and then calmly ask the following simple question: was it in the nature of terrestrial things, or, in the order of human probability, or, within the range of ordinary possibilities that classic paganism would vacate that throne which Zeus-Jupiter had been wont to occupy, so long in Olympic unassailedness unto Jehovah-Jesus, the national Divinity of the detested Jews and the lowly born Nazarene God-Man of the despised Christians, without making a vigorous and decided effort to dispute the claims of the new Deity, without engaging in scornful, wrathful warfare of extirpation against the innovating priesthood and their enthusiastic

followers? And, the only possible intelligent and impartial answer is, methinks, *no!* In other words, the Pagan persecutions against those who went forth into the world to preach the tenets of Jesus, to baptize into his name, to imitate his life, and to bear his cross, must appear to everybody who has studied the annals of the mind, heart, and actions of the human race a necessary fruit of self-love, an unquestionable measure of self-defence.

It was not by any means unnatural that many of the early Fathers and Schismatics should speculate in a refining and devout manner on the source and purpose of the many and severe *Persecutions* which befel their cotemporary fellow-believers, that e. g. Justinus Martyr deduced them, by way of justifying Divine Providence, from the influence of the Demons, and e. g. Tertullian similarly considered them as caused by the Devil, though with divine permission and under divine government, partly that his fellow-believers might be tested, partly that they might be exercised, and partly that they might be punished; that e. g. Cyprian looked upon them as means for strengthening more and more their constancy in faith, and as fulfilments of prophecies, by which the certainty of divine promises and menaces was only the more established; or, finally, that e. g. Basilides and his (Gnostic) followers, believing all evils and sufferings of this life to be divine punishments, concluded that also the persecutions of the confessors and martyrs were only merited visitations for sins which they had committed either secretly or in a pre-existent body. But, we of later generations may, if I do not err, safely leave suchlike would-be profound and pious speculations unheeded; for, has not experience taught us that, on mere grounds of human passion and policy, all Priesthoods and Governments persecute a Religion which happens not to be their own, no matter whether it be diviner or less divine than their own?

I know full well that it would have been a more enlightened and judicious, a more exalted and generous thing, if the Rulers and Populace of the Roman pagan-world had, during the first three centuries of our era, thought, felt, spoken about thus; behold! that religion which was cradled in Bethlehem of Judea is palpably more divine than our own Olympic fictions, and, therefore, we will adopt it; or, it is probably equally divine, and, therefore, we will try it; or, it is possibly somewhat divine at least, and we will, therefore, tolerate it. — For, doubtless, it is manly, chivalrous, wise, just,

beautiful, glorious to subject a new religious doctrine to a fair test by giving it an undisturbed chance, and the powerful many ought not forthwith to make war against the weak few, nor can truth be suppressed by violence, and error will not prevail in the end, though no violence should be used against it: and much else of cognate import we might without the smallest difficulty indite; have not, indeed, numerous grandiloquent philippics against, and pathetic histories of, the Heathen persecutions been composed and published from century to century for well nigh seventeen hundred years?

Far be it from me to excuse or to palliate with one single syllable the saddening and sickening slaughterous tragedies enacted against the disciples of the religion of Jesus during the first few centuries of our era: only Insanity or Inhumanity could undertake the defence of yon blood-stained Caesars; merely to place and arraign them before the tribunal of Reason is tantamount to convicting, and condemning them. But, for the sake of justice and truth, we dare not forget over Gentile Emperors and their Satellites Christian Sovereigns and their Priests, the Christians' persecutions of the Heathen, nay, of one another! If we would be thoughtful men and righteous judges, let us, whilst declaiming so indignantly and vehemently against the Pagans' treatment of *ourselves*, not shrink from reviewing also how *we* in our turn acted towards *them*, and other Pagans, and how we act unto *one another* even up to this present hour. For instance. The Christian Emperor Theodosius, we may remember, formally deposed the Divinities of the Olympos, and justly so, as we think; for they had ceased to be able or fit to rule over the minds and hearts of men; they had become spiritually dead, and were ripe for burial, for utter removal out of the civilized world. Nevertheless, those ancient Gods still counted many believers and adherents in the lands over which the said Theodosius reigned; and, what did he do unto these? Zozomen recounts thus.¹⁾ „When the pagans found themselves deprived of their own houses of prayer“ (I will not now lay any stress upon the circumstance that Theodosius had, with a somewhat questionable sort of Vandalism, commanded the total demolition of the Heathen temples; for I am speaking here only of the principle of personal counter-persecution), „they began to frequent our churches; for they did not dare to offer sacrifices in secret, there being a law

¹⁾ H. E. lib. VII, c. 4, and *ibid.* c. 20 and c. 22.

prohibiting such practice, *under the penalty of death and confiscation of property.*“ But this same Emperor went even further than the Pagan Caesars, of whom it can scarcely be said that they, to any mentionable extent, persecuted the rival schools of their own religion or philosophy, whilst he, on the contrary, played the part of persecutor towards the antagonistic sects among the Christians. „He enacted — thus we learn from the same church-historian — at Thessalonica that the title of Catholic Church should be exclusively confined to those who rendered equal homage to the Three Persons of the Trinity, and that those individuals who entertained opposite opinions should be treated as heretics, *regarded with contempt, and delivered over to punishment.*“ Yet, Zozomen calls the government of Theodosius „wise and peaceful, and in the service of God.“ And the nearly cotemporary ecclesiastical chronicler, Sokrates, informs us (lib. I, c. 9) that Constantine, after he had enthroned Christianity as the state-religion, decreed that „if any one shall be detected in concealing a book compiled by Arius, and shall not instantly bring it forward and burn it, the penalty for this offence shall be *death*; for immediately after conviction the criminal shall suffer *capital punishment.*“ And yet, we know, this same Constantine is frequently believed to have been an excellent Christian, and has been thought worthy of receiving the cognomen of „the Great.“

It is true that e. g. Lactantius still represents with much intelligence and eloquence the immoral and irrational nature of all compulsion in matters of religion, and even claims for the Christians as an advantage over the Pagans that they sought to vindicate and propagate their belief only by instruction, demonstration, patient apologetics and heroic suffering. But, it is equally true that e. g. Augustinus already began to speculate and prescribe on the measure and manner of persecution which the orthodox church might, and ought to, exercise against so-called Heretics and Unbelievers. Not but that he too had at an earlier period of his career considered and declared means of compulsion and persecution unpermissible and injudicious, as likely to produce rather hypocrisy and simulation than real conviction and conversion, and even, according to the latest phase of his opinions and utterances, would have preferred instruction and mildness to compulsion, violence, punishments; if, however, those means should prove of no avail, he proposes and enjoins the latter, nay, not only proclaims the application of terrors and penalties against

Schismatics and Infidels perfectly rational, but even construes it into genuine gospel-love of our enemies, and literal obedience to Jesus' parabolic exhortation: „compel them to come in“; it is his deliberate opinion that the time for turning the leaf had at length arrived: formerly, when the Emperors were not Christians, they persecuted the true Christians; now, Christianity occupying the seat of Power, the arm of temporal Might justly defends the Church and attacks the Dissident. Yet, he reprobated the punishment of death: to such an extremity, according to him, orthodox ecclesiastical zeal must not proceed. — And something similar other *holy* „Fathers of the Church“ thought and taught.

And, would to God that in succeeding ages religious, i. e. irreligious, Persecution had stopped where even the bishop of Hippo had wished it to stop! What loathsome spectacles we should then have been spared! To be silent about those reciprocal venomous deadly warfarings between Arians and Nicæans on account of the exact mode of conceiving, defining, and expressing what cannot by any human possibility be conceived, defined, expressed; or, about the persecutions of the Jews, e. g. in Germany and Portugal; or, about those of the Muhammadans in Granada: what shall we say to the bulls de haeretico comburendo which emanated from the highest ecclesiastical tribunal in Christendom, the overturned or, rather, metamorphosed, throne of the Roman Caesars? What to the autos-da-Fé and the Inquisition-dungeons in Spain? What to the Blood-tribunals of Alba in the Netherlands? What to the Gomarie council in Dordrecht at which the Protestants were represented by Bogermann who had written a dissertation to prove that heretics, i. e. the Arminians, might be capitally dealt with? What to the butchery of the Waldenses, the Bartholomew night, the revocation of the edict of Nantes in France? What to the burning of Huss and the sacking of Magdeburg in Germany? What to the Smithfield fires and the Star-Chamber in England? What to the pillage and expulsion of the Protestants by the archbishop of Salzburg? What of Calvin in Switzerland who, when a lawyer, had written a treatise on Seneca's essay on Clemency, and, when a theologian, had prefaced his celebrated Institutions by warning Francis the First against religious intolerance, but, nevertheless, kindled fatal sagots around the body of his confiding brother-reformer Servetus: which monstrous deed even a Melancthon, though renowned for his gentleness, by letter approved?

This hasty survey of religious persecution in the different lands of modern Europe tells a terrible tale, terrible, but yet true. Tertullian (vide c. 39 of his vigorous and fiery apology of the Christians) could tell us that the Heathen were wont to say of the Christians: „behold, how they love each other“, and „how ready they are to die one for the other.“ Heathens, in later ages, might have parodied yon immortal exclamations with equal truth and justice into: *how they hate each other, and how ready they are to kill one another!*

But, perhaps, such things are of the past darker ages only, a sort of horrid dream from which mankind has awoke in the 19th century, at all events in our own dear native country. I would that it were so! It is true, even Papacy has now-a-days *almost* everywhere, though, haply, not everywhere *quite* (cf. e. g. the Newspaper accounts about Tuscany), given up the practice of slaying men on account of their belief, and singing a te Deum laudamus over their corpses, and set aside such persecuting procedures as might disgrace the intellect of a brute, or, shock the heart of a fiend; but banishments and excommunications and incarcerations still occur ever and anon in the name and to the glory of Him over whose cradle the celestial hosts, spiritually, as we believe, though not literally, chanted „good-will unto men.“ It is true, our Protestant clergy most fiercely declaim from their pulpits against even suchlike odious doings of abhorred Popery; but yet, religious liberty in our blessed land is very far from being on a par with her free political institutions. Though we keep our hands free from blood and bonds, we keep not our minds always free from debasing prejudices, or, our hearts from selfish intrigues, or, our tongues from mean slanderings against those among our fellow-christians who differ more or less from ourselves in the technicalities and terminologies of their religious confession and profession, who do not pray our liturgies, will not subscribe to our articles, cannot approve of our sacerdotal fashions and ecclesiastic polities. Opposite to which same phenomena, it would be well that we should remember that there are fetters which, though not of iron, cut as keenly, stakes which, though not of fagots, burn as deeply, banishments which, though not from country, cause anguish as bitter and solitude as unrelieved, and that, taking all in all, the lot of many who in times of old leapt into the flaming pile with a courageous confession on their lips, or into the amphitheatrical arena with a hymn of exultation in their soul was an almost enviable one

in comparison with such life-long resignation, endurance, patience as many of ourselves must submit to in our humble, but heroic, unwavering, though silent, resistance, whether great or small, to the priestcraft of dominant episcopal or dissenting orthodoxy. „Until to all religions and religious opinions *which contain nothing against the State*, an equally free public cultus is permitted, one must not speak of toleration. I could name among my *very dear friends* persons who think extremely differently from myself, not only socino-deistically, but atheistically thinking ones, and whom I, nevertheless, consider at least as honest in their convictions as I consider myself.“ These words occur in one of Lavater's epistles to the late Prof. Paulus, as communicated in B. I, p. 283 of the biography mentioned in §. 43, and seem to me deserving of all attention and laudation; for their author was, whatever foes and scoffers may say, as thoughtful a man as he was a devout one, despite such manifold peculiarities of his as gifted and sincere original and enthusiastic characters frequently labor under.

But, we return to the days of Jesus.

Foreseeing and foretelling (Mark XIII, 13) that in the *world*, i. e. the sphere of conflicting forces and influences, amid which the Evil and the False and the Foolish ever preponderate over the Good, the True and the Wise, the mission and fate of his earliest followers would be in many ways and for many ages severely tested and sorely tried, that sufferings „which had already cast their shadows before“ would come, that those who were about to slay the shepherd would not be likely to spare the flock, that, as he himself had to pass through a passion-week, his cause, his church would have to pass through passion-aons, he gave unto his immediate disciples comprehensive and emphatic precepts how to act under the persecutions on the point of breaking forth. One of these precepts was: „deny me not before man, or, ye will be denied by me before my heavenly Father“ (Matth. X, 32, 33); and the other: „flee ye from one city into another, if ye find it unsafe and useless to remain longer therein“ (v. 23).

Speaking in general, the first of these two main-injunctions, yon commandment against Apostasy, was well remembered and fondly obeyed in the early christian church, and the menace thereto appended taken deeply to heart; for the „rock“ of truthful devotedness and valiant love in the minds and souls of the primitive christians was of stronger and sterner stuff than yon „Kephas“ whom

the thrice crowing cock had to remind of a treble denial of him for whose sake he had declared himself willing and ready to lay down his life (John XIII, 37); and they „did not shrink from those who can kill the body, but, rather, feared him who is able to destroy the soul“ (Matth. X, 28). „Whithersoever — to use a beautiful and touching biblical simile — the Lamb led, they joyfully followed:“ — and to those noble wrestlers and triumphant heroes, in whom „first love“ was ardent and strong, be here and hereafter the victor-crown of glory!

Also yon second explicit injunction or admonition, the one concerning flight, met with a ready assent and willing obedience in the very earliest ages; for we read (Acts VIII, 1) that e. g. when a great persecution broke out at Jerusalem, all the Christians scattered themselves throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, the apostles alone remaining, though only for a brief while (ibid. vv. 5, 14, 15); and we have every reason for assuming that the Apostles themselves, if we may take the deportment of Paul about which we know much as a standard by which to judge that of the others about whom we possess only scanty and imperfectly authenticated information, exerted their utmost endeavors to escape menacing martyrdom as far and as long as they could do so consistently with christian candor and christian courage; nor is it by any means certain that so many of them ultimately died the so-called martyr-death as later ecclesiastical annals would fain induce us to believe. But, a word I have this moment employed, the term „martyr“ would seem to solicit some little elucidation, if we desire to proceed carefully in our present enquiry.

Μαρτυρεῖν, to bear testimony, *μάρτυς*, a witness.¹⁾ This is the simple general signification of the word according to both its etymological import and the use of the age with which we are at present occupied. Witness, however, may be borne either by word or deed, either technically or spiritually; and, as we just now saw and said, the main vocation unto which the early christians really were called, and likewise necessarily believed themselves called, was to be witnesses unto Christ, to testify of Christ. All such *witnessship*

¹⁾ The reader might compare with what follows, by way of illustrative analogy, *μυστικός*, the closing of the eyes, i. e. for the purpose of contemplation, and *εξετάζειν*, to consider, for the purpose of investigation, and the popular later application of the terms Mystic, Skeptic.

was, therefore, *martyrdom*, i. e. primarily and principally by confession of faith in Christ, in spite of mockeries and menaces, by Christlike carriage and conduct, despite the temptations of the world: something like what — for this was *ante-Christian* genuine martyrdom — is asserted, nor unjustly so, of e. g. Moses who (Hebr. XI, 24—26) „by faith, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of (for) Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.“ But, in this identical chapter (v. 35), attention is also drawn, more especially as regards the Gentile temptations to apostasy in the days of the Maccabees, to another sort of martyrdom, or, rather, martyrdom under what we may consider even more trying circumstances and in an even more potential form, i. e. by actual endurance of a violent death, by sealing one's faith with one's blood; and due meed of praise is, as a matter of course, bestowed upon suchlike martyrdom also. Adding, now, to these latter impressive Jewish precedents certain passages in the N. T. from the lips of Jesus himself, e. g. Matth. V, 10, X, 39, and the facts that Jesus himself, „the true and faithful witness“, had become also by *death* the archi-martyr of his own faith, that so soon afterwards Stephen had become the proto-martyr, and that in the course of time the chief apostles had, or — which was in point of influence pretty much the same thing — were believed and reported to have, undergone the same fate, we can scarcely marvel that the early christians, with that literality of mind which was a heritage of Jewish hermeneutics, and that enthusiasm of heart which was an effect of childlike, sometimes, even childish, faith, should have allowed themselves to take for granted that *bodily* martyrdom, the suffering of *death* in the cause of Christ, was a something whereunto they were especially invited and encouraged, and, therefore, something in and by itself *meritorious* and *glorious*. That they really did so, is incontestible, as I could easily prove by dozens of passages from several of the earliest churchfathers, and even some of the still earlier apostolic fathers. Consequently, still in the phraseology of Eusebius¹⁾ e. g. „to be perfected“ in spiritual life is often synonymous with

¹⁾ Vide H. E. lib. VII, c. 11, and cf. *vita Const.* lib. II, c. 35.

„being put to death“; and, whilst all sufferings and trials for the sake of religion, if not, as it were, stamped by death, were merely *confession*, death, constituting the *highest grade* of confession, was — martyrdom, and martyrdom itself was pronounced a sure passport to the mansions of *most* beatific felicity, and martyrs were regarded as, to use the definition of a Heathen historian of the 4th century,¹⁾ „favorites of the Godhead.“ Indeed, nothing can exceed the perfect ridiculousness of the hyperboles in doctrinal fixations, or the superstitious adulations in practice, by means of which the early christians countenanced and revered suchlike *physical death-martyrdom*; and as we might suppose, the said doctrines and practices in their turn re-acted upon stereotyping lethal martyrdom into a thing of pretty frequent occurrence and an object of pretty general ambition.

Such partially hyper-estimate, namely, and partially pseudo-estimate of Martyrdom gradually evoked a procedure which was the very opposite to that which Jesus himself had commanded and the example of the Apostles themselves had commended touching flight from persecution and consequent non-provocation of death: viz. they engendered more or less voluntary and wilful *self-denunciation* and *self-extradition* unto death.

Already in §. 11, whilst discussing the term *Biaiothanatos*, we took occasion to state that the Classical Pagans were in the habit of calling the early Christians *βιαιόθνατοι* which Augusti, in the work there mentioned, rightly explains as = *αυτοχτερες* (only not, as he forms the plural, *αυτοχτεροι*). If, however, we place before ourselves the chief cotemporary testimonies in which the said insinuation and reproach may be found, we shall easily discover that what was here specifically alluded to was, without a doubt, not *veritable self-slaughter*, but rather only such self-denunciation and self-extradition. What Lucian — I need not repeat the passage, since I have quoted it in the original and in its context in §. 28 — says is somewhat general and vague, and amounts simply to this: the multitude of the then christians were in the habit of delivering themselves voluntarily up to death from a sort of contempt of dying and a fervent hope of eternal life after temporal death. Epictetos, when speaking of the early christians' deporting themselves with in-

¹⁾ Amm. Marcellinus, lib. XXVII, c. 7.

difference in regard to tyrannical arts and measures, expresses himself somewhat obscurely on the point at issue;¹⁾ but the main drift of his meaning is unmistakable: he accuses the Christians (οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι) of utter recklessness opposite to those arts and measures, of courting death from, as it were, a sort of madness (ὕπὸ μανίας) or a sort of custom or mere habit (ὕπὸ ἔθους). The question has been raised, whether both of these two reproachful substantives refer to the Christians, or only the latter one; for the two relative members of the sentence are slightly incoherent; yet, I should incline to view the conjunction καὶ as indicating that also the ὕπὸ μανίας refers to them, and to reject Upton's proposal to substitute ὕπὸ ἀπονοίας, desperatione seu dementia, for ὕπὸ ἔθους, as not only unnecessary, but altogether inadmissible, but, on the other hand, to assume with Schweighäuser that the adverb ὥς originally had a place before οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι, since, if I mistake not, every reader must at once miss it for both grammatical and logical purposes, and moreover, we actually meet with it in a kindred passage from Marcus Aurelius which now follows. The philosophical Caesar, when imparting his Stoic, and even suicidal, counsels, introduces, nevertheless, this cautioning and dehortatory clause:²⁾ μὴ κατὰ ψλῆν παράταξιν, not from sheer obstinacy, ὥς οἱ Χριστιανοί. The whole passage runs about thus. „What a sublime soul, ready in a moment to separate from the body, whether it will be extinguished, or scattered into dust, or continue! Only, however, if such readiness be an effect of one's own conviction, not of mere refractoriness, as with the Christians, and manifest itself considerably with dignity without any tragic pomp, and for the purpose of convincing others.“

But, most striking, because most direct, in our present point of view is the well-known account which Tertullian has handed down to us, towards the conclusion (c. 5) of his brief apologetic work *ad Scapulam*,³⁾ of the peculiar address which a certain Roman Proconsul in Asia made to a number of Christians who had appeared before him as parties accused. Here is the narrative in the original with a couple of „the fiery African's“ own preliminary sentences.

¹⁾ Dissertt. lib. IV, c. 7. Vide Upton, vol. II, p. 257, ad h. l., and especially his references to the works of Julian the Apostate; and cf. also Schweighäuser in his edit. of Epictetos, T. II, pars II, pp. 913, 914. ²⁾ Commentt. lib. XI, c. 3. Vide Gataker's lengthy annotations on this passage in his Opera, vol. II, p. 319, and cf. also Gibbon, Decline and Fall, ch. XV, note 191, and ch. XVI, note 95. ³⁾ Opera, edid. Leopold, pars I, p. 252.

„Crudelitas vestra gloria est nostra. Vide tantum, ne hoc ipso, quod talia sustinemus, ad hoc solum videamur erumpere, ut hoc ipsum probemus, nos haec non timere, sed ultro vocare. Arrius Antoninus in Asia cum persequeretur instanter, omnes illius civitatis Christiani ante tribunalia ejus se manu facta obtulerunt; tum ille, paucis duci jussis, reliquis ait, ὦ θεῖοι, εἰ θέλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, κρημνούς ἢ βροχούς ἔχετε.“ A similar half-scoffing, and half-serious, innuendo Justin the Martyr bore in mind, when he commenced one of his apologetic sentences thus: ¹⁾ „but, that nobody may say: all of you, by inflicting death upon yourselves, go now hence unto God, and spare us trouble, I will explain to you why we do not act thus, and why we, when questioned, fearlessly confess.“

We are, now, perfectly willing to admit that the above accusations and mockeries proceeded from men who were most imperfectly acquainted with Christianity, nay, avowedly inimical to it, partly, perchance, in consequence of their very ignorance of it. Nor may it be quite irrelevant here to remark that the Romans and Greeks were almost utterly unaccustomed to aught resembling *religious* martyrdom, more especially in those lax times with which we are at present dealing. Indeed, Religion, of whatsoever kind, can scarcely be said to have ever been unto them a thing sufficiently earnest and precious to deserve, much less to call for, death; and the only experience which, perhaps, either of those nations had gained of religious martyrs was in their wars with the Jews whom they accordingly, and partly for this very reason, despised as mad zealots, and with whom they, unfortunately in many respects, for a long time confounded the Christians, ²⁾ whom the Jews themselves called in mockery Ναζωραῖοι and Γαλιλαῖοι, which nick-names the Gentiles soon adopted, believing Christism — for even the name Χριστιανοί, coined by them at Antioch, was itself a partly contemptuous mere party-name, according to the analogy of Pompejani, &c., as if Christ had been a sectarian —, to be only, as it were, an offshoot, and scarcely so much as even a nuance, of Judaism, at warfare with other Jewish sects. *Political* martyrs they would, doubtless, more readily have sympathized with, nay, even likewise, haply, philosophical ones!

¹⁾ Apol. II, c. 4. ²⁾ Vide the needful proofs of this fact from Roman writers in Hase's already quoted *Leben Jesu*, p. 10.

Nevertheless, according to the cotemporary testimony of the *churchfathers themselves*, there was much good reason for the insinuations and censures above recorded; for those very arguments by means of which, as we shall learn in a subsequent §, perhaps the greater number, but certainly not all, of them, expressed their disapproval of the principle and practice of self-denunciation and self-extradition on the part of their fellow-worshippers, demonstrate the frequent existence of such principles, and the occasional occurrence of such practices. Wherefore, a few simple general reflections thereon may here already not be out of place.

Very celebrated and often repeated have become the boldly figurative words of Tertullian's „the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church“ (Apologeticus, c. 50); and, no doubt, it was necessary, for reasons I have already assigned in this §, that the corpses of many christian warriors should fill the moats ere the banner of victory could wave on the walls of the strong fortress of classic paganism. But, those words have, as it seems to me, sometimes been urged in too pregnant a manner; and for our own part we would rather pronounce the walk of the early christians to have been the „leaven of the world.“ The martyrdom in their lives rather than that by their deaths would appear to me to constitute the corner-stone of the edifice. Not that we believe perfect christlikeness to have swayed the early periods of Christianity any more than perfect happiness reigned in the golden ages of Fiction. But, we may be certain that the greater number of the early christians were, in comparison with their pagan foes, by force of superior insight, benevolence of disposition, purity of conduct, self-denial and earnestness and devoutness of religious faith and feeling „burning and shining lights“, and, therefore, as beacons placed on high for those who „wandered in darkness and the shadow of death“, unto them as patterns radiant of whatsoever things were „lovely and of good report“ (cf. Phil. II, 15, and IV, 8). Thence it of necessity follows that they were positively called upon to preserve their lives as long as possible, i. e. to be as long as possible efficacious for the establishing and extending of the kingdom of God on earth, and, consequently, not eagerly and wantonly to cast their lives away. Therefore, in this point of view already self-denunciation and self-extradition do not admit of defence. They were also extremely imprudent and unwise, because, as we just now saw, they became a stumbling block and

an offence, instead of a means of enlightenment and conversion, to even the wiser and better class of the Heathen. They were, thirdly, a moral error, because they palpably anticipated that which alone could justify the suffering of death as a thing morally unavoidable, viz. a direct violation of conscience, whether by denying their belief, or paying divine honors to the busts and genii of the Caesars, or entering idolatrous temples, or frequenting indecorous spectacles. They were, finally, spiritually interested and selfish, if I may thus express myself, in very many instances at least; for, they were a grasping at the imagined and hoped-for crown of everlasting felicity, ere there was substantial reason for believing that the work each had to do in this world was ended, and that it was the Lord and Master's will and pleasure to call his servant hence unto rest and recompense; or, they were a vain-glorious boast and provocation, more closely allied to stubbornness and fanaticism than to such heroic resignation and valiant humility as the Gospel summoned its warriors to vow and act up to.

Inasmuch, moreover, as common sense decrees as a self-evident proposition that „qui facit per alium, facit per se“, the equivalence of self-denunciation and self-extradition unto certain death with actual suicide was not by any means exactly an erroneous conclusion to arrive at on genuine philosophical principles and by legitimate logical reasoning, as, indeed, some of the churchfathers themselves thought and said (vide §. 70), and as sundry modern christian writers have stated in almost still more explicit and expressive language. For instance, I remember having somewhere read in some ancient French poet lines which, though I cannot vouch for the correctness of every word, are in substance at least as follows:

„Le vray Martyr toujours attend sa Mort;
L'enthousiaste y court, et court à tort:
Le premier meurt en héros intrepide,
Et le second perit *en Suicide*.“

And, whilst speaking of French poetry, I will not deny myself the pleasure of quoting some few characteristic lines from a passage in which the elder Corneille graphically represents the eagerness of a recent Christian convert, Polyeucte, under the reign of Decius, for Martyrdom, with whom Nérarque, an older Christian, argues.

N. Vous trouverez la mort.

P.

Je la cherche pour lui.

- N. Et si ce coeur s'ébranle.
 P. Il sera mon appui.
 N. Il ne commande point que l'on s'y précipite.
 P. Plus elle est volontaire, et plus elle mérite.
 N. Il suffit, sans chercher, d'attendre et de souffrir.
 P. On souffre avec regret quand on n'ose s'offrir.
 N. Mais dans ce Temple enfin la mort est assurée.
 P. Mais dans le Ciel déjà la palme est préparée.
 N. Par une sainte vie il faut la mériter.
 P. Mes crimes, en vivant, me la pourroient ôter.¹⁾

But, to come to sober prose, French this time too. Passing by the brief and dry dictum of so irreverent a scoffer and avowed a defender of suicide as the author of le *Système de la Nature* that „a number of martyrs who offered themselves voluntarily for death, were suicides“, we will prefer citing some of the sagely discriminatory remarks, to which we in the main cordially subscribe, of a severe and learned anti-suicidal moralist, the French protestant Barbeyrac.²⁾ „Il y a ici deux choses à distinguer: la disposition à souffrir le Martyre, supposé qu'on vienne à y être appelé; et le souhait ou la recherche du Martyre en lui-même, et pour lui-même. La première n'emporte qu'une parfaite résignation à la volonté de Dieu, au cas qu'il juge à propos d'appeler le Chrétien à souffrir la mort pour la cause de l'Evangile. L'autre est un désir direct du Martyre, purement et simplement comme tel, un souhait qui précède non seulement les occasions, mais qui les fait chercher, et qui porte à s'y offrir avec ardeur. On peut et l'on doit être tout prêt à souffrir le Martyre, sans que la répugnance naturelle, et les précautions innocentes, qui tendent à éviter la mort, perdent pour cela leurs droits. Mais d'avoir un empressement pour le Martyre, à cause de lui-même, et jusqu'à le rechercher de propos délibéré, ou à ne pas l'éviter, quand on le peut; c'est ce qu'on ne sauroit faire, sans témoigner des sentimens, qui ne sont conformes ni à ceux dont Nôtre Seigneur a donné l'exemple, ni à ce qu'il dit à ses Disciples.“ Further remarks of his, which I will not transcribe, and more especially his allusion to the effects of *Hegesias'* teachings, make it clear that he

¹⁾ Polyeucte, acte II, scène 6. By the by, the theme of this celebrated tragedy bears a strong resemblance to an event which happened at Merus in Phrygia under the reign of Julian, and which Sokrates (H. E. lib. III, c. 15) recounts of three christians, Macedonius, Theodulus, and Tatian. ²⁾ Traité de la morale des pères, ch. VIII, vide §. 35—39, pp. 123—127.

viewed such „*désir direct*“ as something very kindred to, not to say really identical with, veritable self-destruction.

The presumption, now, on the part of sundry early christian catholic or schismatic teachers, of the permissibility or even laudability of suchlike indirect suicide, if we must for the sake of distinctness employ this term, and the occasional commission of it in consequence of the said presumption, formed, as it were, the first step to the bolder belief that one might, and even ought to, actually lay violent hands upon one's self rather than suffer or do aught that could, according to the (more or less imperfect) ethical and dogmatic notions of those primitive ages, endanger the salvation of the soul, or, bring down disgrace upon the cause of Christ. Thence, in part at least, the otherwise strange phenomenon that *some* of the early christians, despite their horror of bloodshed in any and every form, even e. g. by the magistracy or in self-defence, and still more in war or in the circus, could reconcile themselves to self-slaughter, nay, extol it as a lofty virtue and a glorious action, of which matter pretty numerous instances and proofs will come before us, when we discuss patristic literature. Viewing, then, yon Donatist-self-slaughters as only a terribly earnest consummation of certain prejudices and passions with which some of the orthodox Fathers themselves had carried on a more or less ambiguous and dangerous dalliance, we at length resume that thread which we already on p. 56 of this § allowed to slip out of our hands.

Touching, then, yon passage of the N. T. upon which the Circumcelliones seized as a shield for their mad extravagancies, we doubt not, for the reasons above assigned, that its primary reference was really to *physical* life, though, of course, for the very same reasons, especially in regard to the then ages and generations, when in the warfare waged between Christism and Paganism the actual loss of earthly life was not infrequently the price at which life eternal had to be purchased. Nevertheless, it seems to me equally certain that the said words have a truth in them which is valid and enduring for all generations and ages. The „life“ of man consists not only in his breath and years, but also in those selfish gains, social honors, and sensual pleasures which „the world“ always has bestowed upon, and always will reserve for, its worshippers and favorites. „To hate“ one's life in this world is, therefore, not only as much as not to love the prolongation of one's days *too much*,

but also as much as not to love the environments of earthly existence in a *wrong manner*. Whilst, on the one hand, we must never forget the temporal or local relations of certain sayings of Jesus, we must, on the other hand, bear in mind that often speaking, as it was the mode of the East, in mescholim, brief, epigrammatic gnomes, and often under the influence of such holiest enthusiasm as glowed within him, his expressions were frequently more sweeping than minute, and the great principle embodied in the few homely words both admits of only a comparative application and requires a kind of modifying analysis. We must have sat some time meekly and calmly at his feet, ere those giant-like antitheses of his, e. g. love and hatred, life and death, light and darkness, God and Mammon, which stride through his utterances about the mood of the human soul and the principle of human action, can explain and vindicate their true and beautiful meaning unto us. A too literal conception of mere words, as it has led to some of the harmless puerilities of Quakerism (cf. e. g. Matth. V, 37) and some of the fearful sophistries of Romanism (cf. e. g. Matth. XVI, 18), also led yon old man of 75, whose case we mentioned in §. 24 (cf. Falret, p. 16), to hang himself, after he had previously more than once attempted to drown himself, and led even the churchfather Origenes to commit an act which has by some been suicide.

§. 67. THE ANTI-SUICIDAL SPIRIT OF THE N. T.

It has thus appeared to us that there is in the writings of the N. T. just as little any individual precept which in express words interdicts and denounces suicide as there is any individual precept which in express words vindicates and commends it. But, happily, it is not by searching out, referring to, dwelling upon *particular passages* that the true and full sense of the Religion of the New Covenant as regards our topic must be exactly ascertained or may be most fitly discerned. Here absolute silence, howsoever undeniable, anything but implies indifference, and still less conveys assent, touching such subjects as the one before us. What is virtually forbidden, need not be, as some foolish people seem to have imagined, literally prohibited: else, we might agree, perchance, with that reason which a Newgate ordinary is in Jonathan Wild made to assign for his choice of Punch, viz.: „that it is a liquor nowhere spoken ill of in

Scripture“,¹⁾ and easily fill a small book with hermeneutic anecdotes quite as puerile and ludicrous, not to say irreverent and frivolous.²⁾

Those various writings which constitute the earliest documentary literature of Christianity were addressed to reasoning creatures and bequeathed unto them. Pur-blind idiotcy was as little intended to sit in judgment upon them as quibbling sophistry. A domestic animal has to be trained to do, or to forego, this or that specific thing; a child has to be taught by particularizing commands and prohibitions; but what most articulately and audibly speaks to a rational being who has arrived at the years of discretion is such *Spirit* as hovers over and breathes through the totality of a Book, revealing unto him what of manifold meaning and momentous significance is therein enshrined, and efficaciously, whether gently or impulsively, leading and urging him on to draw logical inferences, to shape legitimate deductions, to make justly proportioned practical applications, and thus to open the portals of what seems doubtful or difficult, to step inside of the rightful and lightful marge which separates the truth-loving and conviction-seeking reader from the mere drudge and drone.

The teachings of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists and developed in the speeches and epistles of the Apostles, may be said to bear some such relation to the beauty and law of the drama of christian life as the highest and deepest canon of poetic art bears to the great phenomenon of Poetry in general, or, as the clearest and devoutest potential system of legislation bears to a complete theory of the sacred idea of Law: only the outlines are given, the boundaries laid down, the goals indicated; and, as creative genius must fructify all rules of composition, and the ideal of right amplify all legal prescription: whoso would read and understand the literal utterances of the N. T. aright and fully, must now and then endeavor to discover what stands above, below, between the lines, generalizations which consistently evolve themselves out of the specifications, spiritualizations which are supplementally conformable to the words put forth. And in such wise and by such process only, but safely, the most acutely discerning understanding as well as the humblest earnest heart will be able, if I mistake not, to discover compass, chart,

¹⁾ Vide the *New Spirit of the Age*, I, p. 289. ²⁾ Vide e. g. the first volume of the *Percy Anecdotes*, *passim*.

pole-star that will guide the wanderer surely on that path of enquiry which now lies before us.

Hume, in a note on p. 22 of the pro-suicidal Essay we shall discuss in a later §, hazards the following remark. „That great and infallible rule of faith and practice (i. e. the New Testament), which must control all philosophy and human reasoning, has left us in this particular (i. e. concerning suicide) to our own natural liberty. It would be easy to prove that suicide is as lawful under the Christian dispensation as it was to the Heathens. There is not a single text of scripture which prohibits it.“ Our philosopher seems thus to wish us to take for granted that he would not have presumed to pen his defence of suicide, if the N. T. had not plainly indicated its own neutrality on the matter by silence. But, if I divine correctly, most readers will deem this declaration on his part somewhat gratuitous and hypocritical, and be by it reminded of what seems to be beyond dispute, viz. that e. g. even in the early editions of his great historical work a note or two may be found which were, palpably, the mere offspring of conciliatory policy, i. e. of accommodation to the so-called prejudices of the public, and which Hume therefore, as soon as his established literary reputation enabled him to dispense with suchlike fictitious appliances, himself quietly expunged.

The so-called skeptical or infidel writers also among the French and Germans have arrived at pretty much the same results, as far as I have become acquainted with their utterances on this matter. One example of each of these two nations will suffice to make up a literary trio. Voltaire in one of those Essays of his which we quoted in §. 18 says what follows: „je ne prétends ici faire l'apologie d'une action que les lois condamnent; mais ni l'ancien Testament, ni le nouveau n'ont jamais défendu à l'homme de sortir de la vie quand il ne peut plus la supporter.“ This passage is unequivocal, and by the light of it we must, doubtless, view and understand every other testimony of this careless and hap-hazard writer's, though it should seem at first sight to affirm the very opposite. If, for instance, he likewise in one of the said Essays affirm „la religion païenne défendait l'homicide de soi-même, ainsi que la chrétienne“, we must suppose him to be alluding, not to the New Testament at all, but to the Canon Law; for the like of him, nominal Catholics writing amid Catholic influences and for a Catholic public, not infrequently employ the terms Christianity and Canon Law as

synonyms, and evidently place the dicta of the corpus juris canonici on a par with the precepts of the gospels and epistles. Moreover, the juxta-position of Paganism with Christianity in the said passage completely nullifies the value of the testimony, supposing Voltaire really to have meant the documents of the N. T. in the second of these two passages; for, if the Christian Religion forbid suicide only in the same manner and measure in which Classical Paganism had done, its interdiction most assuredly cannot be said to be either very explicit or very tenable.

One of the most modern German philosophers, Arthur Schopenhauer, has, besides treating of suicide in other works of his to which we shall revert in a later §, expressly devoted to it one of his minor dissertations,¹⁾ and in it we read thus. „So viel ich sehe, sind es allein die monotheistischen, also jüdischen Religionen, deren Befenner die Selbsttödtung als ein Verbrechen betrachten. Dies ist um so auffallender, als weder im alten, noch im neuen Testament irgend ein Verbot, oder auch nur eine entschiedene Mißbilligung derselben zu finden ist.“ „Der außerordentlich lebhafteste, und doch weder durch die Bibel, noch durch triftige Gründe unterstützte Eifer der Geistlichkeit monotheistischer Religionen gegen den Selbstmord scheint daher auf einem verhehlten Grunde beruhen zu müssen: sollte es nicht dieser seyn, daß das freiwillige Aufgeben des Lebens ein schlechtes Kompliment ist für Den, welcher gesagt hat πάντα κατὰ λιαν? So wäre es denn abermals der obligate Optimismus dieser Religion, welcher die Selbsttödtung anklagt, um nicht von ihr angeklagt zu werden.“ What, whether little or much, we would fain annotate on other points in this dictum, shall find its place in our annotations on Modern German Metaphysics in their general bearing upon our subject.

However, enough of what stands written on *this* side of modern philosophy; we hasten to turn the leaf, and read together what may be found on the *opposite* page, inscribed by men who may be, as it seems to me without any undue partiality, pronounced to have a better right to a vote on our question, because we have good reason to know from personal acquaintance or otherwise that it, whichever way it might have been given, would have been not only accompanied by *devout* earnestness, but also dictated by *scrupulous* thoughtfulness. I will select as spokesmen a recently deceased coun-

¹⁾ Parerga und Parastipomena, 1851, B. II, pp. 257—259.

tryman of our own, whose name has become, and most justly so, a watchword for unprejudiced enlightenment and manly piety among almost every class and sect of our community, and a still living German Professor of Divinity whose acuteness and erudition his numerous disciples at Bonn and Berlin can testify to be guided and graced by a singular measure of spiritual excellence. Dr. Arnold.¹⁾

„We are shocked at those persons, who cannot perceive that the whole spirit and principles of Christianity are a sufficient condemnation of suicide, although there be no express words which say: thou shalt not kill thyself.“ Dr. Nitzsch.²⁾ „Und der Selbstmord, ein Verbrechen, welches in der heiligen Schrift (we, of course, here limit this expression to the writings of the N. T.) zwar auf mittelbare Weise, aber oft genug für Das, was es ist, erklärt wird, ist gerade um so unausführbarer mit christlicher Unschuld, da es gleiche Christenpflicht bleibt, das Leben für den Dienst Gottes und der Menschen zu wagen und aufzuopfern, wie es zu ertragen und für das Reich Gottes fruchtbar zu machen.“

In what manner, then, and by what means may the Spirit of the N. T. be most aptly and most briefly said to condemn and forbid suicide?

I will not here and now marshal forth and comment upon e. g. that host of passages in which we are bidden to despise all mere terrestrial relations and environments by dint of self-denial and self-mortification for the Lord's sake; or, in which our attention is directed to the especial Providence of God; or, in which the sacred dignity of the human body is specified; or, in which the value of suffering is enforced; or, in which the true believer's victory over death is asserted; or, in which the period of man's earthly vocation is declared to be fixed by God; or, in which human life is likened unto a race the goal of which the divine game-giver and prize-distributor alone has a right to appoint, and up to which those must proceed who wish to obtain a crown; or, in which the ἀγάπη is described so emphatically and searchingly as to seem to afford a sufficient safe-guard against every temptation to self-destruction; or, in which human nature appears to be affirmed to have received by the incarnation of the λόγος a character too dignified and holy to

¹⁾ Fragment on the Church, Appendix I, p. 140 of the second edition.
²⁾ System der christlichen Ethik, p. 292 of edit. 3.

become with impunity wantonly abused and a *fortiori* voluntarily mangled. — Beyond all doubt, suchlike individual passages are suggestive of much that may be fruitful to many; but, on the one hand, if we argue from isolated passages only, we are apt rather to confine our reasoning to mere abrupt items than to extend it to the general tenor, of the N. T. utterances; and, on the other hand, a bold and skilful assailant may often prove more or less successful in weakening or destroying suchlike one-sided and partial procedure. Here, too, the solitary arrow may be broken, whilst there is infrangible strength in the union of many arrows. In other words, if we launch into a deeper sea, we shall land in a broader and safer haven. Therefore, I cannot but side with those christian moralists who, inclining to ignore the mere mechanic force of more or less debateable exegetical experiments, prefer placing themselves upon the high ground of the *πνευμα* and *δυναμις*, so to speak, of the New Testament writings, equipping themselves with the complete spiritual armory of New Testament revealings, and thus attempting deadly battle against the subtle monster-foc; nor shall they, as I take it, *then* fail to scare away, fell, and crush the spectre-giant, despite his flippant self-complaisant boastings and his deep and dire nets of casuistry.

Whilst, however, gathering together the essential characteristics of New Testament ethics for the purpose of applying them in their synthetic totality to our subject, we must be on our guard not to ascribe to Christianity a Spirit which some of its most enlightened and devout professors would hesitate to acknowledge. What is essential and eternal in Christianity can here alone concern and interest us, not what is merely accidental, local, and temporary, not scholastic deductions, or mystical inductions, not neo-Christianic ascetic exaggerations, or pseudo-Christianic communistic extravagancies, not false mortification of the Flesh, or still falser rehabilitation of the Flesh, not *laissez-faire* indifferentism, or fashionable sentimentalism. Thence, for instance, we cannot but conscientiously reject many in that string of *fourteen* reasons by means of which Sailer, the late Catholic and Jesuit bishop of Ratisbon (where, by the by, a very lovely marble monument has been erected to his memory — for he was a very gifted, pious, and useful man — by his degenerate royal pupil, the Ex-King of Bavaria) endeavored to prove¹⁾ that suicide stands in

¹⁾ Ueber den Selbstmord. Für Menschen, die nicht fühlen den Werth, ein Mensch zu sein, 1785, pp. 49—60.

most fearful opposition to the letter and *spirit* of Revelation; and by much prefer the few lines with which Thiele von Thielenfeld, a non-theological Protestant writer, has wound up his otherwise not particularly bright monograph on suicide; ¹⁾ for the half a dozen points which he specifies as arguments are not subject to denial, doubt, dispute, if tested by independently thinking minds as fundamental elements of the Spirit of the universally accepted documents of our Religion. „The Spirit of the New Testament restrains man from heavy misdeeds and manifest vices; it fills innocent sufferers with lofty, divine consolation in their misfortunes; it shows the guilt-laden, penitent sinner the way to salvation; it turns man's eye away from the earth and directs it heavenwards, thus linking to the existence in Time an Eternal existence; it commends entire and joyful resignation to the will of God; and, finally, it plants in the human heart universal philanthropy which sanctifies self-love, and thus secures it equally against contracted selfishness and unnatural hatred of life.“ — And, all we fain would now hereto add is simply this: not of what either stubborn dogmatists or silly bigots are wont to call Unbelief, but rather of the disbelief of *such universal and practical truths only* do these words of Cowper's (in his poem Truth Works, V, p. 68) hold good:

„Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.“

But, some might incline to ask, was it wise or equitable on the part of the writers of the primary documents for christian tuition and guidance thus to leave the verdict about the right or wrong of suicide to be debated and decided upon by moral philosophy, sound common sense, individual conscience? As we have previously seen, with sundry other religious codes the matter stands otherwise: some of the sacred books of the East furnish the disciples of Hindooism with distinct instructions concerning suicide; Muhammad expressly forbids suicide in the Korân and the Sunna; nay, even several of the philosophers of Greece and Rome deemed it a part of their office and duty to warn against, and to prohibit, suicide in such works as were intended to become unto their followers textbooks of religious faith and moral action. Moreover, Jesus and his

¹⁾ Gründe für und wider den Selbstmord nebst Beantwortung der Frage: welches ist das sicherste Verwahrungsmittel gegen denselben, 1817.

Apostles often specify and enumerate in catalogue-like copious lists the evil things that „come out of the heart of man“, and manifest themselves as „the fruits of the flesh“, and „exclude from the kingdom of heaven.“ Why, then, their unbroken silence on what so frequently occurred and was so frequently sanctioned in their time on that very Hellenic, Italic and Barbaric soil in which the young religion of the Cross was forthwith to be planted, and to strike its strongest and deepest roots? Doubtless, both Jesus and his Apostles did expressly interdict many things which would appear to us less criminal and less important than self-slaughter is!

It would be easy to say that they forgot to interdict suicide expressly; but, such a reply would be as unwarranted as it is unworthy. Or, one might suggest that they did not view it as a moral act for which the doer was responsible, because they ascribed it to physical disease, mental aberration, &c.; but, such an answer would be tantamount to merely impugning without any reason whatsoever their knowledge of the human heart, of history, of ethics. Or, we might try to evade assigning any definite reason by merely following up this one captious question of ours by some other equally captious counter-question, e. g. why did Jesus or his Apostles not expressly interdict slavery, a pestilence as devastating and a practice as flagrant among Greeks, Romans, Barbarians in those days as suicide was, a phenomenon which is an equally sad violation of such reverence as is due to what is divine in human nature and of such equity as is needful in the social organism, an institution which is palpably as irreconcilable with the spirit and repugnant to the destination of Christism? But, such an indirect mode of argument has ever appeared to me in almost every instance unfair, and could scarcely here, were we to enter upon a minute parallel, avail us much, because slavery was, as we have already called it, an *institution*, and not merely, like suicide, a phenomenon. Therefore, if Jesus or his Apostles had taught that a slave-holder or a slave could not be a christian, that the causing or the suffering of slavery was incompatible with christianism, such a doctrine would, doubtless, not only have placed very considerable, and, speaking humanly, perhaps almost insuperable, difficulties in the way of the propagation of the new religion, but would or might likewise, if we may judge from sundry analogous historical data, have imparted at the very outset to the said new religion a more socialistic than spiritual cha-

racter, have stamped it as a species of political and revolutionary innovation, as a rash violation of laws sanctioned by long usage into constitutional rights, as an unjust invasion upon property and possession radically interwoven with the organization of the then-society, and, finally, have suddenly and inevitably kindled the flames of premature revolt and murderous strife on the part of the many whom light must only have dazzled, and whom liberty must only have rendered dissolute. The interdiction of self-slaughter, on the contrary, neither would nor could have been exposed to misconstruction, or perverted into social infringements, or abused for unwarranted purposes, but have been simply and solely, we cannot but believe, a moral and religious precept salutary to society, beneficial unto the individual, a wise addition to the law against homicide, a just link in the chain of an ethical system. But, if I mistake not, this very last term I have employed, viz. *system*, opportunely steps in to answer the interrogation upon which we are at present engaged.

As in reference to Slavery: so or similarly in reference to Suicide likewise.

Jesus and his Apostles enjoined due regard for even the lowest classes of the community, laid stress upon the acknowledgment of the original equality and affinity of all men, as being sprung from the blood of the same parents and fashioned one and all according to the image of God, thus, on the one hand, enunciating the axiom of man's rights and dignity as man, whilst they, on the other hand, prescribed unto both masters and servants such deportment as could scarcely fail to take, as far as possible, from their reciprocal relation both the sting and the stain, thus making forthwith indirect war upon whatsoever was manifestly oppressive and degrading in the then-state of slave-traffic and slave-treatment. But, they did not by any means *systematically* develop the question into all its details. Such was their abolitionist-procedure. And, as regards their anti-suicidal efficacy, we would fain remark what follows. When Jesus in his various didactic conversations and parables denounced individual ills or sins, he usually did so either in reply to definite queries, or, in connexion with specifically provocative causes, or, in relation to natural phenomena which casually presented themselves; and, when the Apostles in their epistles or speeches reproved individual vices or crimes, they ordinarily did so with a direct bearing upon circumstances and events which existed or occurred, or, had

become prominent and prevalent in the congregations to which they specifically addressed their communications. Aught *systematic*, i. e. formally arranged and completely wrought out, a manual of moral or political philosophy in our modern scientific sense of this term, neither Jesus himself nor his Apostles supplied, or intended to supply; indeed, anything of a formal system, i. e. fundamental principles of theoretic and practical Reason exhausted into all their applicabilities, did not lie in the spirit and fashion of the East, where Christianity's cradle stood, but belonged rather originally to Occidental Greekism only, and has passed over into modern European thought and culture as a bequest from it. Far less, we may say, with the evil deed as such than with the evil heart as the source of all evil doing lay the concern of Jesus and his Apostles; the principle of evil as the root of evils they aimed and strove to eradicate, in no wise content with merely lopping off the branches or wafting away the leaves. Christianity was to manifest itself as an influence upon all the mental and moral faculties of its professors, as a harmonious totality of virtue which took possession of the entire man and declined an armistice with any vice, and, therefore, — coming to our topic — engendered and developed in the Christian himself, in the collectiveness of his thoughts and feelings every possible anti-suicidal potency, thus giving birth to that magnum argumentum of *πνεῦμα* and *δυναμὶς* which no logics and no metaphysics can even shake, let alone overthrow. Also in this respect yon words are true: „the church of Christ is built upon a rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail“ (Matth. XVI, 18).

Nevertheless, it is most true, Suicide — as likewise Slavery — has never entirely ceased and vanished beneath and through the sway of the Gospel. But, what of this? Let us not over-estimate the value of mere literal commandments of the N. T. by way of apologizing for the practices continued in Christendom; let us rather study the heart of man, watch the spirit of ages, listen to the voices of the times, and then we shall learn rather to grow silent and humble ourselves than to cavil and dispute. Methinks, for instance, theft, murder, hypocrisy, carnality are unmistakably and undeniably denounced explicitly and forbidden expressly in the N. T. documents; yet, have fraud, bloodshed, falsehood, and „the great sin of great cities“ ever entirely ceased and vanished, though the worship of Mercury has been abolished, the temples of Mars have been levelled

with the ground, the mask of the Pharisees has been torn off, and the Paphian bowers have been uprooted? We have asked the question, and the Alpha and Omega of the Gospel himself answers it, when, representing himself as a Sower who went forth to strew heavenly seed upon the path-ways of the earth, he in the same breath informs us (Mark IV, 3—9) that „some fell by the way-side and was devoured away; some upon stony places, and was scorched away; and some among thorns, and was choked away.“ Christian lands, as they still contain thousands upon thousands of slaves, are year by year still stained with the blood of thousands upon thousands of slayers of themselves. Yet, we will not despair. Yon costly seed is, as we believe, still imperishable, despite all appearances to the contrary, and will, we trust, the longer the more grow forth in strength and beauty; but, man must water and tend it where God has planted it, as well as carry it whither it has not as yet been conveyed.

If we would search for suicide-causing influences, for „fowls of the air“ which devour the goodly seed, and „the sun-heat“ which makes it wither, and „the thorns“ which choke it — in this our own specific direction, we need not cast a glance either across the Atlantic or across the Channel, but may abide by our immediate environment, and, thus limiting our vision to our dear and favored native land, shall see more than it is edifying to look at.

Look, for instance, at him! He has by the accident of birth inherited almost boundless wealth, and is thereby enabled to gratify in fantastic idleness and capricious variableness all his lower appetites, all his most wanton cravings; and, when everything that money can purchase and procure has been tried and tasted, the feeling that „all is vanity“ may easily creep into the empty heart, and satiety, being begotten, ever and anon itself begets suicide. Or, look, for instance, at him! His wealth was acquired by unceasing effort, but alas! less by honorable, earnest daily toil than by speculations and hazards, by gamblings and jobbings of every description. Ever if retained, it may not, perchance, yield such inward peace as only the produce of conscientious principle can afford; but if, when again risked for still greater gain, it should have been lost again, the ruined mammonist, whose soul had already been ejected out of tranquillity and equilibrium, is easily tempted to fling his life upon the wreck of his fortunes. Or, look, for instance, at him! Confounding getting on and getting up with getting onwards and getting upwards, am-

bition and vanity bade him attempt to rise irregularly and prematurely in so-called social position, public opinion, general fashion, and, having sold the divine birth-right of a calm, self-sustained, self-relying consciousness of inward worth and genuine dignity for a sorry mess of fallible human verdicts and vain-glorious earthly issues, he ultimately finds his worship after all rejected and scorned by the very pseudo-divinities to which it was proffered; and, haply, a sting of disappointment, humiliation, discontent is all that remains to him, which vampyre-like sucks his blood of life away. Or, look, for instance, at her! She would, perhaps, have borne her lot of poverty and lowliness patiently and heroically, had not the insolence, contemptuousness, cruelty of her so-called superiors, the so-called upper classes, misused her helplessness for degrading ends, hunted down her wretchedness into despair, goaded her dependence into desperation, and rendered death apparently her best and even only redeemer. — Knowest thou not, O gentle reader, of suchlike examples? — But, ere matters get thus far, there precedes the educational stadium in our English life, at home, at school, at college, our national response to the unquestionable N. T. exhortation „bring up thy child in the fear of the Lord“, which forms a corner-stone in the foundation of every „City of God“ on this earth of ours, which we, nevertheless, have managed somewhat blindly „to reject.“ Look, for instance, at those children among the lower orders! Where is their childhood? Where that simple, innocent, mirthful state, the recollection of which should sweeten after-years of toil and hardship like the sound of village-bells, like the wild flowers of the forest-path? Worse than brutal severity has darkened the young mind, hardened the young heart, converted early experiences into agony and early reminiscences into a Hell. And, when we consider that a Government and a Clergy who expend vast sums and much zeal upon many far less important and religious things than cheap or gratuitous rational education of the children of the poor would be, still allow slothful or vicious parents not only to let their offspring grow up without any clear and useful knowledge either moral or social, but to send them, whilst thus ignorant and unmoulded, forth to beg, or hawk, or steal, to play juvenile parts on that stage where experienced knaves are already waiting to instruct and instigate youthful dupes: why should we marvel much, if sooner or later such adventurers in life's career extricate themselves from the clutches

of the prison or the brothel by rashly withdrawing themselves into that resting-place where neither the penal law nor the seducer's art can reach them more? Or, look, for instance, at those children among the higher orders! We then see homes in which Master and Miss are brought up with such unseasonable indulgence as can scarcely fail to render their youthful hearts either too weak and sensual to do successful battle against the almost unavoidable roughnesses of later life, or too prideful and self-willed to bear with valiant humility and resignation the almost inevitable trials of later life. We then see boys and girls not unfrequently sent to such private schools, whether day- or boarding-establishments, as have been started and are kept by persons of broken-down fortunes who would gladly have preferred any other means of livelihood, if only circumstances had favored their recourse to any other source of support; by persons who neither know nor care to learn, that natural gifts, solid acquirements, noble affections alone can fit man or woman for the education of youth, and whose characters, influences, proceedings really often all but justify that godless and idiotic national prejudice of ours which leads us to place those to whom we have confided the mental and moral training of our children on a par with the makers of their dresses and the dressers of their hair. We then see colleges, renowned seats of much-lauded learning, where young men, not yet out of their teens, are drilled into contending for prizes and honors which often the veriest mechanism and dryness may win and gain, whilst that which elevates the mind to serious thought and warms the heart into noble enthusiasm is by statute and command sacrificed to subscription-orthodoxy and hollow chapel-attendance, nay, not rarely makes way for the most flagrant dissipations and the incurring of ruinous debts, iron chains which hang heavily on the feet through lengthening future years, and occasionally drag down their luckless captive into an equal measure of unwillingness and unfitness for either „living or dying unto the Lord.“

Is this rude sketch an exaggeration, a caricature? I would that it were! But, not a little experience and not a little observation assure me that it is not, though it be — this is most true, and was my intention, and could not be otherwise — a picture only of „the shadows“, not of „the lights“ of modern English life. Just because I love my native land sincerely, I will not and cannot blind myself to her faults and short-comings. The brighter the light some-

where, the greater the shadow elsewhere is. However, much of all that to which we have above alluded is changing, though slowly, yet surely, and changing for the better. Not that „the Millennium“, raved about by Evangelicalism, is very likely to erect its throne more particularly in our Island, or, that „the coming man“, poetised about by Young Englandism, seems to be very near his arrival, or, that the „five points of the Charter“, if carried in law and realized in life, would secure national conversion unto true Christianity, complete national regeneration, perfect national salvation. But yet, a people that numbers and reverences among its leaders such men and organs as and and and and and and — the reader who believes and loves and hopes as I do will easily fill up these dashes for himself, and I will not name those of whom I was thinking, lest my ignorance of other kindred spirits might betray me into unjust limitations — *must* progress to ever greater Christishness, casting off shallow skepticisms, wild fanaticisms, and selfish worldlinesses. A quite christian entire nation there never was, and, probably, never will be; even a quite christian entire family always was and, perhaps, always will be a rarity under the sun of any clime; and as long as there are guilty or weak souls on earth, there will also be slayers of themselves: and would be equally, I ween, whether the N. T. had declared them to be „in danger of the Gehenna of Fire“ in a future world — which thing it has *not* done; or, whether it had thrown the mantle of delicate silence over their yonder-fate, so that they might account themselves, as it were, sinners from mere ignorance, not from wilful transgression of a literal commandment, — which thing it *has* done. What remains for each of us, until that time when Christianity which broke the gladiators' swords, shall — as burst the slaves' fetters — so blunt the suicide's steel, is: to let our minds be furrowed by thought and our hearts by suffering that yon good seed of the Gospel may be therein planted and therein take root; and to do each what lies within his power that *that* may be fulfilled whereof the Poet whom our Sovereign Lady has wisely chosen to be her Laureate, lately sang, when he apostrophized the New Year's Chimes thus (Tennyson's in Memoriam, p. 163):

„Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand,
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.“

§. 68. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON PATRISTIC LITERATURE.

The general opinion and method of modern writers on ecclesiastical history assign the second, third, fourth, fifth, and, perhaps, sixth centuries of our era as the temporal limits of *church-fatherism*, designating the so-called uninspired teachers of the first century *apostolical fathers*, and the numerous more or less orthodox theological authors up to well nigh the age of the Reformation *scholastics*. And, perhaps, not without some good reasons; for, the christian writers prior to the second half of the second century can scarcely be said to have thought originally or argued eruditely on the dogmatical or ethical elements of Christianity, and prior to the sixth century the foundation may be said to have been decisively laid for the entire significant structure of the Church in the direction of doctrines, rites, laws, and social influences, so that the gleanings left on this field for the authors in the middle ages were more or less accidental and incidental, formal and external, until the new reformatorial epoch burst forth with its dissolving forces, renovating appliances, and reorganizing endeavors. Thence, the extension of church-fatherism to the tenth century (e. g. the catholic Port-Royalist Pascal in his already quoted Provincial Letters styles Bernhard of Clairvaux „the last of the Fathers“, and the episcopalian minister, J. S. Howson, in his pretty and instructive recent lecture on the History of the Mediterranean, adopts and repeats this dictum) seems to me not much more warranted than the imaginative evangelical F. W. Krummacher's (vide his funeral sermon on Prof. Neander) styling this eminent theologian „the latest (der jüngste) of the churchfathers.“ We shall, therefore, leave the boundary-line above alluded to, and confine what we have to bring forward in the next two §§ to those christian writers who flourished from the 2nd to the 6th century.

That these same writers, now, as far as they remained and moved within the pale of the so-called church catholic, attained to an almost undisputed authority among the early christians, is not unnatural; for, they were pretty nearly one and all Bishops, i. e. leaders and rulers of such communities as, being themselves incapable of independent investigation and self-guidance, had little else left unto them except to believe and to obey: for which same reason

the downright orthodox catholic even of the present day has inherited an extraordinary measure of reverence for them, and regards their convictions and utterances as possessing something very like authoritatively binding *dogmatic* significance. The cry „hear the church“ means for him scarcely more or less than: listen to the church-fathers! — But, to the clear-sighted and stout-hearted Protestant who rightly comprehends the genuine meaning of the everlasting liberty of ever-renewed Protest which constitutes his birth-right, and who is, whether priest or layman, conscious of his ability himself to judge of doctrine and duty as well as any far-back Doctor of the Church, nay, often much better, the Fathers can appear one and all only as so many early christian teachers and writers in whose opinions and testimonies no *essentially distinctive* character whatsoever is inherent, but to which, rather, only a peculiar *literary* and *historical* value attaches. — I am, of course, aware that, since the year 1833, there has arisen among ourselves a third party, a sort of nondescript mongrel, born of united Protestantism and Catholicism, and variously styled Tractarianism, Puseyism, Anglo-Catholicism, &c., but numbering among its captains many most learned, gifted, noble, and godly men „whose very shoes“ a great number of those are „not worthy to bear“ who, clergy of the „high and dry“ state-establishment, do not in the least care to know what they believe, and in sober reality believe nothing at all, except that it is a very respectable, comfortable and profitable thing to be a Reverend member of the Episcopal Anglican church. As far as I have had an opportunity of looking into that party's writings, they would fain consider the views and decisions of the *patres ecclesiae* as deserving of an *exceptionally exceeding* measure of attention and veneration, though they may not regard them as altogether *infallible*. Well, these Anglo-Catholic countrymen of ours in this our 19th century with their „Tracts for the Times“ which are, as I take it, *most unseasonable* and ominous „signs of the times“, may remind us, only in the reversed manner, of another strange and transient phenomenon of our days, a Reforming Pope on the Throne of St. Peter at Rome. For a brief while simple-minded, credulous people gazed, lost in amazement and admiration, on well-meaning, short-sighted Pio Nono, and seemed, foolishly enough, to be sorely disappointed and disgusted, when they ere long discovered — what they ought to have at once foreknown, viz. that a Pope and a Re-

former cannot be united in the same person, that Popery is past reforming, is a negation of all real reform, so that there was no cause at all for wonderment, when the Ninth Pius by and by could no longer help himself, but, having got entangled in self-made meshes, was extremely glad to avail himself of aught strong and sharp enough, e. g. even French *Republican* bayonets, to cut the said meshes asunder, and set him once more at liberty, and pitchfork him back again into unreformed quintessential Papacy. Similarly, if I do not err, Protestantism and Popery cannot be wedded into Puseyism. It is a spiritual mesalliance, hateful unto God and ridiculous to men, an unnatural, incestuous union, a mere vain attempt, disguise it as we may, on the part of priesthood to snatch up again the obsolete reins of decisive power which had only gradually, but most justly, dropped, or been wrenched, out of their hands. Whither honest consistency leads, the path of the illustrious antagonist to the notorious Achilli has shown to all intelligent men; whither unscrupulous, self-seeking sacerdotal dalliance leads, the discerning Englishman may learn from what stands revealed concerning a Right Reverend champion of the party.¹⁾ — „Tracts for the Times?“ Truer would the title have been: Tracts *against* the Times: a clog upon the wing of the Spirit of the age, a drag upon the wheel of the car of our national progress towards liberty, light, and strength, trashy and absurd controversies about e. g. „prevenient grace“, which has been wittily denominated also „prevenient moonshine“, and „white surplices or black gowns“, on the respective merits of which tailors and dyers might be safely left to adjudicate, and numerous equally subtle or equally puerile questions concerning which Cyprian or Athanasius, Hieronymus or Augustinus had imagined and decreed this or that as „dogma and rite of the Church.“ — Better it were, I ween, if we pondered those gently stern words which were uttered of old: „let the dead bury their dead; follow thou Me;“ and the spirit, if not the voice of the founder of our faith still speaks thus to us, and bids us attempt and endeavor to solve more difficult problems, to settle more significant questions, to serve more important causes.

Yet, in one respect, Puseyism has already done an essential ser-

¹⁾ Vide Edinburgh Review for 1850, article: Bishop Philpotts; and more especially the author's (J. W. Conybeare) most convincing and convicting Rejoinder to his Bishop's most evasive and equivocal Reply.

vice to our theological literature. Far too long and far too much, if I mistake not, had the clerical public of England, and, perhaps, also of other Protestant countries, superciliously neglected and ignored those interesting and instructive writings which had been penned by „the Giants in those days.“ This fact may be regarded as one of the evil fruits of antagonism to Catholicism. If the Romish church had gone, and still go, immeasurably too far in viewing and using the writings of the Fathers as sacred writ, our polemic zeal had, on the contrary, manifestly induced us to assign unto them too low a place in our theological studies, and to consign them almost to oblivion. Which prejudice, extremely prejudicial to a thorough insight into the historical development of christian thought, feeling, life, literature, Puseyism has largely contributed towards removing, by placing the works of the Fathers in cheap and portable editions and even careful versions upon our library-shelves, and by all but compelling the more educated among us to bestow some portion of our leisure upon the perusal of the one or the other of those ancient tomes, lest we should feel compelled to keep our lips closed, when in Newspapers and Periodicals the conversions and perversions of our cotemporaries are communicated and commented on. But, unless I err, the greater benefit thus conferred still remains behind, and will in due season come forth. It is, on the one hand, in no wise surprising to me that the opinions and exertions of the Puseyites should have hitherto made so much noise and gained so much applause; for the uneducated or imperfectly educated multitude ever loves, admires, advocates what by dint of its one sidedness and extravagance carries along with it the appearance of decision, and leads on to dazzling results. Such moderation as naturally arises from the all-sided and modest balancing of opposite views is, because a work of deeper and more delicate inward life, the task and achievement only of the thoughtful and refined. But, on the other hand, my surprise would be great, if a more persevering and systematic study of patristic literature should not, the longer the more, convince us that its authors were one and all simply men, like any and every other set of men, merely thinking thoughts which had no higher origin than other men's thoughts, and writing writings which cannot legitimately claim any greater authority than other men's writings; that, if they were mighty men in their age and generation, Abbot-Samson-like realities, having a work to do, and doing

it, having something to say, and saying it, having a mission to perform, and going ahead in it and accomplishing it, the one was frequently at issue with the other, the one not infrequently contradicted himself at different periods of his life, exchanged one opinion for another, passed over from sect to sect and party to party, like any other class of enthusiastic or speculative, erring or wayward mortals; and — what is much more important still — that much of what we are now in the habit of popularly believing, representing, accepting as the *unanimous* voice of *orthodoxy* touching e. g. the Trinity, Original Sin, the Atonement, the Inspiration of Scripture, the Canon, &c. was anything but the *uniform* teaching of the *prominent* literary organs of the christian church during even the three, let alone the six, earliest centuries of our era. Puseyism cannot level a deadlier blow, not only at its own specific dreamings about a *primitive* unity and genuineness of christian doctrine and discipline, about a spirit revealing itself in the primitive church as a universal tradition and valid as norm of faith for the exposition of Holy Writ unto all later ages, but likewise at two thirds of what constitutes our State-established and State-favored orthodox divinity in general, than by enabling and inducing the British public at large, the laity in particular, to read for itself, whether in translations or in the original, the chief documents of patristic literature, and thus to discover for itself how exceedingly various and conflicting, confused and superstitious much of that is which some hare-brained and self-complacent curate would fain, from the scanty and scrappy stores of his second-hand reading, deal and dole out to his audience as the Theology of the Fathers, as the ante-Nicaean credo of the Church Apostolic, or the post-Nicaean votum of the Church Catholic. —

But, the reader will think, and I cannot but agree with him, it is highest time that we should approach our special topic, and state what the leading church-fathers thought and taught about suicide, which theme one circumstance may be said to have forced upon their consideration as something absolutely necessary, viz. their *apologism* for Christianity. In other words: the fact that many of the Pagans reproached the early christians with suicidal predilections and principles, that actual suicide really did occasionally occur among the early christians, and that, finally, christian martyrdom itself oft-times in such wise intertwined itself with voluntary death that the former was confounded with the latter, and, indeed, not only by the

persecuting pagans, but also by the persecuted christians themselves, could not fail to compel the Fathers of the Church to assign what they took to be the mind of the N. T. as well as to enunciate their own individual sentiments regarding this subject, and, indeed, not only for the purpose of enlightening and rebuking the Heathen, but also for that of guiding and correcting the judgment of the Christians themselves, on so important and intricate a matter. A second circumstance, too, may be said to have suggested the said question to them as seasonable and advisable, viz. their *antagonism* to Heathendom. In other words: the commission of suicide had enacted so brilliant a part in the national life of the Greeks and Romans, and the discussion about suicide had assumed so controversial a character in Greek and Roman philosophy, that the literary wardens and appointed expositors of early Christianity could scarcely avoid laying bare the position of their own religious tenets to this theme.

§. 69. THE OCCURRENCE OF REAL SUICIDE AMONG THE CHRISTIANS IN THE AGE OF CHURCH-FATHERISM.

Ere we proceed to collect and discuss the verdicts of the church-fathers on actual suicide, we will simply place together such accounts of facts as are to be found in their own writings. Such as may be met with elsewhere, we shall for the present leave unheeded, since we desire, not a multiplicity of anecdota, but rather only a brief historical survey of actuating motives, the existence of which can be proved by actions which had resulted therefrom.

Eusebius informs us that *the fear of apostasy* had become in his time unto sundry christians a motive for suicide.¹⁾ At Antioch, during the rule of Maxentius, certain Christians, determined to avoid being put to the test of sacrificing to the Emperor or to the Gods, lest they might, in the moment of trial, prove too weak to resist the temptation and to endure the tortures awaiting them, hurled themselves headlong from the house-tops: ὡν τινὲς τὴν πείραν φεύγοντες, πρὶν ἀλῶναι καὶ εἰς χεῖρας τῶν ἐπιβούλων ἔλθειν, ἄνωθεν ἐξ ὑψηλῶν δωμάτων ἑαυτοὺς κατεκρήμνισαν, τὸν θάνατον ἄρπαγμα θέμενοι τῆς τῶν δυσσεβῶν μοχθηρίας. The τον θανατον αρπαγμα θεμενοι

¹⁾ H. E. lib. VIII, c. 12; cf. also the case of Apollonia, *ibid.* VI, 41.

Crusé translates simply by „considering death an advantage“, and this is, doubtless, the general sense; „mortem prae malitia impiorum aliquid esse rati quod ipsis sit rapiendum, quo ipsis sit potiendum, i. e. bonum aliquid et commodum, as Heinichen annotates thereon in his edition of our work. Indeed, I have drawn the reader's attention to this phrase mainly on account of the similar idiom which Paul makes use of (Phil. II, 6) in reference to Jesus: οὐχ ἀπαγμὸν ᾗγήσατο, thought it not robbery“, and a pretty complete enumeration of the many and varied explanations of which Rheinwald²⁾ has not failed to give in his exact work on this epistle.

From the same ancient ecclesiastical historian we learn further that in his day the fear of the loss of *virgin purity* or *matronly chastity* had become unto sundry christian women a motive for suicide.¹⁾ When speaking of the reigns of Diocletian and Maximinian, he relates what follows. „A certain holy and admirable female, admirable for her virtue, and illustrious above all at Antioch for her wealthy family and reputation, had educated her two daughters, now in the bloom of life, noted for their beauty, in the principles of piety. As they had excited great envy among many, every measure was tried to trace them to their concealment; and when it was discovered that they were abroad, they were, with a deep-laid scheme, called to Antioch. They were now caught in the toils of the soldiery. The mother, being at a loss for herself and daughters, knowing what dreadful outrages they would suffer from the men, represented their situation to them, and, above all, the threatened violation of their chastity, an evil more to be dreaded than any other, to which neither she nor they should even listen for a moment; at the same time declaring, that *to surrender their souls to the slavery of demons was worse than death and destruction*. From all these, she suggested, there was only one way to be delivered, *to betake themselves to the aid of Christ* (ἡ ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον καταφυγὴ). After this, all agreeing to the same thing, and having requested the guards a little time to retire on the way, they decently adjusted their garments, and cast themselves into the flowing river. These, then, thus destroyed themselves.“ The same writer, in that other work of his mentioned in the foot-note, when speaking of Maxentius at Rome, relates thus. „Now a certain woman, wife of one of the se-

¹⁾ lb. and Const. vita, lib. I, c. 34. ²⁾ Commentar, 1827, pp. 117—121.

nators who held the authority of the Prefect of the city (i. e. Rome), when she understood that those who ministered to the tyrant's lusts were standing before her house — she was a Christian —, and knew that her husband through fear had bidden them take her and lead her away, begged a short space of time for arraying herself in her usual dress, and entered her chamber. There, being left alone, she sheathed a sword in her own breast, and immediately expired, leaving indeed her dead body to her conductors, but declaring to all mankind, both to present and future generations, *by an act which spoke louder than any words, that the chastity for which Christians are famed is alone invincible and not to be destroyed.* Such was the conduct of this woman.“

The gifted, refined, philosophically and poetically, but alas! likewise monastically, inclined churchfather, Gregory of Nazianz († 391), distinctly mentions to us the fact that in that same fourth century of our era, certain Monks killed themselves, not only slowly and indirectly by an ascetic and agonistic life — which thing the reader, if at all conversant with the history of early Monkism would of his own accord take for granted as a self-understood circumstance —, but really and literally, *in order to escape from sin*; and I cannot do better than let good old Johann Matthias Schröckh recount this matter for us, albeit his analysis is perhaps somewhat needlessly minute.¹⁾ „His sentiments on this already at that period so universally admired species of piety are manifest also in another poem, wherein he recommends the monks of the parish of Nazianz to Hellenius, a toll-official, and his friend, for liberation from all taxes.²⁾ These servants of God and bearers of Christ, he says, no longer concern themselves about earthly matters, but by day and by night sing hymns in honor of their King. They possess none of those perishable goods which the Prince of the World bestows sometimes on one, sometimes on another, person, for the purpose of insnaring them. Their highest wealth is the hope of such goods as can never be lost. They flee from matrimony, cities and men; and, on the contrary, apply themselves to a hidden life in Christ. Some of them dwell in clefts and caverns; they seek for repose, this friend of heavenly wisdom. Others load themselves with chains, in order to

¹⁾ *Christliche Strengesittliche*, Leipzig edit. of 1782, Bd. VIII, pp. 261—263.

²⁾ The said admonitory effusion (carmen 47: ad Hellenium pro Monachis) stands in the Latin version of his Opera, Antwerp 1612, T. II, pp. 54—56.

quench the evil in themselves. Many enclose themselves, like wild beasts, in small huts, where they never see a human being. There are persons among them who fast twenty days consecutively; others still who maintain an unceasing silence, and sing even the praise of God only with their hearts. One of them abode for entire years at church, and, what is almost incredible, did not allow himself during the said time to be overcome by sleep. To another a raven brought a part of its (or his) food. Another, again, repaired to that mountain from which Christ ascended into Heaven: and there he stood immovable amid winds, snow and frost; he occupied himself with sublime contemplations only, until he was conveyed half-dead into a cell built for him. Gregory even confesses that he cannot narrate without horror *that some of these monks despatch themselves by hunger, or, with a rope, or, by hurling themselves into abysses*, for the purpose of escaping from sin. He implores Christ to pardon them this unreasonable zeal. But, the praise which he lavishes upon these people in general — thus our German historian concludes his abstract — who yet often enough destroyed their bodies by cruel penances perceptibly, although slowly, is just as inconsiderate.“ — It is, of course, only that portion of this narrative I have put in italics which now interests us; and, since I shall not revert to this churchfather in the sequel, I will here append in the Latin version those few lines in the said didactic poem which bear upon the said portion.

„An Christi causa pulchrum est accersere mortem?
 (Occultis verbis verba cruenta trahens).
 Si genus hoc mortis non prudens ille probarit,
 Tum multas mortes, inquiet, isti obeunt.
 Pars sibi namque manu vitam eripit, et fama dura,
 Pars laqueo, in praeceptis pars scrupulosque ruit,
 Isti inquam veri testes. laetique relinquunt
 Hanc vitam, et vitae tristitia bella nimis.
 Parce pils animis, stolidis tamen, optime Christe.“

§. 70. THE VERDICTS OF CHURCHFATHERS.

These we shall now place together (illustrating them by occasional comments as we proceed) as nearly as may be in their respective order of time, i. e. without making any but a merely chronological distinction; for, it could serve no real purpose to separate

between e. g. Greek and Latin, Occidental and Oriental writers and teachers, since I feel unable to trace satisfactorily the genetic growth of those verdicts which will come before us, and solicit discussion.

I. Justinus († circa 166).

This earliest of the churchfathers proper manifestly entertained an exceeding reverence for martyrdom which was, indeed, in his time almost the necessary consequence of the profession and confession of Christianity; for, let us bear in mind that two of his three principal works are *Apologies* for Christianity and the Christians, the larger one being addressed about the year 140 to Antoninus Pius, his sons, the Roman senate and people, and the smaller one being composed about the year 162 in consequence of the cruel procedure of a Roman Proconsul against the Christians under the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Though, however, we should scarcely feel ourselves justified in accusing him of having exactly approved of the exaggerated zeal on the part of those christians who needlessly offered themselves for condemnation to martyr-death, there cannot, as it seems to me, be any doubt about his having gone too far in both vindicating and eulogizing, albeit somewhat indirectly only, something very kindred to a sort of enthusiastic and eager desire for martyrdom. I will content myself with quoting what he says e. g. when speaking of the possibility of denial before a Tribunal: 1) „but we will not render ourselves guilty of any lie in this life; for, desirous (ἐπιθυμοῦντες) of the eternal and pure life, we strive after a dwelling-place which is promised unto us with God the Father and Creator of all things, and hasten to confession (σπαύδουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν), being convinced and believing“, &c. What he here intimates as his own opinions and sentiments differs considerably from that cautious „serpent-wisdom“ and „bewareing of men“ which Jesus himself enjoined (Matth. X, 16, 17), and from that wise warning which the early congregation at Smyrna 2) uttered in reference to the well-known case 3) of the Phrygian Quintus' having disavowed his faith, appalled by the sight of the wild beasts which were to tear him to pieces, after he had needlessly pressed forward into danger and incited his pagan judges by invectives: δὲ

1) Apol. I, c. 7. Cf. Apol. II, c. 4 in fin., and also in Apol. I, c. 38 what he says on a notorious line in Euripides's *Hippolytos*: „the tongue swore, but the soul not.“ 2) *Ecclesiae Smyrnensis de Martyris S. Polycarpi epistola circularis*, c. 4. 3) Vide Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* IV, 15.

τοῦτο οὖν, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐπαινοῦμεν τοὺς προδίδοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαίδῃ οὐχ οὕτως διδάσκει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. But, at the same time, it can scarcely be construed into an approving subscription to e. g. that eagerness of his for martyrdom, that request of his that nobody should intercede for him, that resolve of his to entice and irritate the wild beasts in the Amphitheatre to do their work effectually and expeditiously which the earlier martyr-bishop Ignatius puts forth in two of his epistles.¹⁾

But, at all events, we can be quite positive that the perpetration of actual suicide on the part of Christians appeared to Justin a thing too monstrously anomalous and absurd either to become general, or to be defensible, because, if they were to murder themselves, they would be doing what lay in their power to frustrate the designs of God in the world, to prevent the propagation of the human race, and the spread of the divine doctrine. Οὐκ εἰχῇ τὸν κόσμον πεπονημένον τὸν θεὸν δεδιδάγμεθα, ἀλλ' ἡ διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπειον γένος χαίρειν τε τοῖς τὰ προσόντα αὐτῷ μιμουμένοις προέφημεν, ἀπαρέσχεσθαι δὲ τοῖς τὰ φαῦλα ἀσπαζομένοις ἢ λόγῳ ἢ ἥργῳ. Εἰ οὖν πάντες ἑαυτοὺς φονεύσομεν, τοῦ μὴ γεννηθῆναι τινα καὶ μαθητευθῆναι εἰς τὰ θεῖα διδάγματα, ἢ καὶ μὴ εἶναι τὸ ἀνθρώπειον γένος, ὅσον ἐφ' ἡμῖν, αἵτιοι ἐσόμεθα, ἐναντίον τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλῇ καὶ αὐτοὶ ποιῶντες, ἐὰν τοῦτο πράξωμεν.

With these words²⁾ he forcibly meets and indignantly repels that insinuation or proposition which I have already mentioned in §. 66, and which was kindred to the reproach or incitation of yon Proconsul's in Asia Minor who, having commenced, under the reign of Commodus, to persecute the Christians, but, finding that all the christian inhabitants of the town appeared before his Tribunal, was astounded by their number, and with praiseworthy humaneness condemned only some few to death, declining the invidious and fruitless task of shedding larger streams of blood: an occurrence which, as we have seen, Tertullian recalled to the memory of the Proconsul Scapula when the latter's persecution of the Christians, presumptively at the commencement of the reign of Caracalla, seemed to call for an apologetic and exhortatory work from the pen of the

¹⁾ Ad Trallianos, c. 4, and ad Romanos, c. 5 and c. 8. Vide also the account of his defying mien before the Emperor Trajan, in the *Patres Apostolici*, edid. Jacobson, vol. II, p. 551sq. ²⁾ Apol. II, c. 4. Opera, edid. Otto, vol. I, p. 178.

former. And those words embody a rationication, most general though it be, quite worthy of „the philosopher“ Justinus, whereas in the previously quoted passages „the martyr“ Justinus (for, as we know, both of these cognomina posterity has agreed to confer upon our churchfather) might be said to speak. It is true, they are uttered with especial reference to the Christians only and *merely* affirm *their* killing themselves *solely* for the purpose of getting out of the world, to be *culpable* suicide; but, it would, I think, argue extreme narrow-mindedness, were we unwilling to discover in them simple and certain first principles which apply to *all* men as such, if not in the same manner, yet in an essential measure. We, therefore, deem ourselves justified in inferring from them that the earliest christian teachers already evidently understood Christianity to *condemn* suicide, and in this respect not only to co-operate with that change which had come over much of the moral philosophy of classical paganism, in a great measure through the instrumentality of more or less cotemporary New Platonism, but also to reduce anti-suicidism to a clear and plain practical precept, by stripping it of mythical vagaries and mystical reveries. When, however, Justinus specifies (Apol. II, c. 11—13) the zeal for martyrdom evinced by the primitive christians as a primary influence in converting him from his earlier delight in the doctrines of Plato, puts it forward as one of the most powerful arguments for Christianity's divine origin, and triumphantly exclaims that for Pagan Greek philosophy nobody had willingly and voluntarily died, inasmuch as all merely sensual, intemperate, impious persons would shrink from martyr-death, we must, to some extent at least, dissent from him, since we cannot bring ourselves to believe *that* upon which he lays so much stress to be necessarily a proof of either the objective verity of a creed or of the spiritual-mindedness of its professors.

Not of the celestial nature of the cause. For, might not almost every religion, howsoever false and low, nay, almost every political creed, howsoever fantastic and pernicious, and almost every social endeavor, howsoever chimerical and ontrageous, if *resisted* and *persecuted*, exclaim: „behold! a cloud of witnesses“, boast of its cohort of martyrs? *Then*, namely, convictions are inflamed into passions, and, though the latter should not exactly rise unto actual avidity for death, and provocation of death, we generally find that, at all events, a death-charged decree is encountered by a death-ready con-

fession, by the feverish will-strength of determined self-devotion. Thence, as we said, the mere numbers and sufferings of Martyrs cannot well be looked upon as in and by themselves proof sufficient of the divine nature of a cause. Were not, for instance, in the early ages of the christian church itself the heresies of Montanus, Marcion, and the Donatists renowned for their numerous martyrs? Or, in later ages and our own times, to be silent about metaphysical caprices, ethical phrensies, socialistic politics, trivial or flippant, Muhammadanism, Popery, Anabaptism, Mormonism, each in its own peculiar fashion? Just and true, therefore, in this respect is what e. g. Voltaire says in the 5th canto of his *Henriade*:

„Le fanatique aveugle, et le chrétien sincère,
Ont porté trop souvent le même caractère;
Ils ont même courage, ils ont mêmes desirs.
Le crime a ses héros, l'erreur a ses martyrs.“

Nor yet of the personal holiness of the victim. For, have not sensual excitement, inflexible obstinacy, to which matters everybody's own heart may with its individual experiences readily bear testimony, and, additionally, a certain sort of selfish speculation and calculation, on which last matter we will for one moment dwell, qualities and motives that are sometimes the very opposites of genuine personal holiness, but too often accompanied and evoked martyrdom in the lap of Christianity, and more especially during the first few centuries of our era? When we, for instance, find Hermas visionarily assigning to the martyrs indiscriminately a place on the eleventh paradisiacal mountain, the twelfth being the highest seat of honor; or, Cyprian unholily suggesting that God would avenge the martyrs upon their persecutors in this world or in that to come; or, Tertullian foolishly teaching that by martyrdom all such stains as had been contracted since baptism, would be cleansed away; or, Origenes madly dreaming that martyrdom was also a means to effect forgiveness for others, inasmuch as the martyrs assist those who pray, and procure unto them the remission of sins; or, Ambrosius enthusiastically proposing that worship should be celebrated by night in the churches of the martyrs, and candles lighted over their graves; or, finally, Chrysostomos credulously believing that the departed martyrs and their relics could and did work miracles on earth: — who is not reminded of the semi-spiritual and semi-carnal cupidities and vanities of this poor, frail human heart of ours, or, who would ex-

actly shrink from remembering that also Muhammadanism easily induced its warrior-hosts to sink willingly martyred beside its crescent-banner by proclaiming that the spirits of martyrs would be lodged in the crops of green birds who shall taste of the fruits, and drink of the waters, of paradise?

II. Clemens Alexandrinus († 220).

This learned and moderate, though also occasionally, as it lay in the nature of the school to which he belonged, somewhat confused, churchfather speaks in one of his three principal writings most rationally and discreetly at considerable length of (the perfecting power of) martyrdom in general; and, whilst so doing, he, according to his own declaration, having reserved this topic for the instruction of the more advanced, enters upon sundry fixations and elucidations which are specially interesting and decisive in regard to our specific enquiry. I allude to the fourth book of his *Stromata*,¹⁾ i. e. a series of dissertations or rather annotations in connexion with numerous quotations from both Pagan and Christian authors, a very erudite, but likewise, as the title itself (*Tapestries*) might lead us to suppose, very motley and incoherent, performance.

Clemens, first of all, directs his attacks against τινες τῶν αἰπατικῶν who had fallen into the error of interpreting the word martyr in too *idealistic* a manner, of taking martyrdom to signify merely knowledge of the true God, and adoption of the true doctrine. We have, consequently, here to deal with an extreme directly opposite to that of conceiving the said term in too *realistic* a sense (vide §. 66). The somewhat earlier († 209) churchfather Irenaeus, bishop of Lugdunum in Gallia, had already with manifest astonishment and vehement indignation complained of the existence of that former misinterpretation which he charges, it would seem, more especially upon the Basidilians (vide Potter's notes on Clemens, and Grabe's notes pp. 361, 247 in his edit. of Irenaeus). „sed nec quidem necessarium esse dicentibus tale martyrium; esse enim martyrium verum sententiam eorum“ „Et quum haec ita se habeant, ad tantam temeritatem progressi sunt quidem, ut etiam *martyres spernant* et vituperent eos, qui propter Domini confessionem occiduntur, et sustinent omnia a Domino praedicta“, &c.²⁾ — The speculative pe-

¹⁾ Opera, edid. Potter, T. I, p. 571. ²⁾ Vide his work contra omnes haereticos, lib. III, 18, 5, and lib. IV, 33, 9 in Irenaei opera omnia, edid. Stieren, vol. I, pp. 521, 671.

cularities of Basilides, a Gnostic at Alexandria in the first half of the 2nd century, need not here detain us, except as far as his disciples, although not he himself,¹⁾ derived from them, i. e. from one element in them, viz. Doketism, or, the fabulous notion that Christ or Jesus himself was not really crucified, at least in part the duty or right to deny Him in every possible manner, to consider His confessors servants of the Demiurgos, the blood-witnesses for His name deserving of contempt, and hypocrisy and simulation opposite to the Pagan persecutions justifiable and prudential. Whether, however, suchlike Mysticism and Jesuitism distinguished the Basilidians specifically among the fifty and odd Gnostic sects, I am unable to state, and shall, therefore, gladly have recourse to Neander's other noble monograph on „the genius of Tertullian“, in which he introduces to us at considerable length²⁾ the collective reasons which certain Gnostics in the age of Tertullian (who died in the same year as Clemens, and wrote a *Scorpione contra Gnosticos*, i. e. an antidote to the scorpion-bite of the said pseudo-teachers) had for refusing, and even opposing, *bodily* martyrdom, reasons which, we might perhaps say, are a mixture of abstrusely singular theosophy and carnally shallow sensualism. Their substance, however, is about as follows. Even confession itself is not needed; for, one must not expose the mystery of one's faith to the uninitiated multitude: it is folly and harm to condescend to accommodate one's self to their standing-point, it is, as it were, „casting pearls before swine.“ Further, one may keep one's convictions to one's self, inward aspexion and conviction being the essential thing, and external words and usages mere *ἀδιάφορα*, which do not in the least condition or affect one's real thoughts and feelings. Again, Christ has once for ever suffered for us to rescue us from death, so that it is in vain to give ourselves up to death, as if He could become thereby a gainer. Finally, it is not the perfect, holy God of the Gospel who desires human sacrifices, but only the blood-thirsty Demiurgos of the Old Testament who did not disdain the blood of even oxen and goats.

Clemens, now, whilst admitting the true knowledge of God, and the adoption of the true doctrine to be *conditiones sine quibus non*, proceeds to demand something more, viz. exposure to dangers and

¹⁾ Neander's *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme*, 1818, pp. 81, 32, 43 ff., 49 ff., 54, 67, 86. ²⁾ *Antignosticus*, 1825, pp. 137—140.

sufferings for one's confession, and, if need be, more especially the sacrifice of one's life; for, it is in and by itself blessedness to suffer death for the love of God. And, verily, there would seem to have been some need at that time, for we find him himself writing in this same work (Strom. lib. II): „we have daily before our eyes large streams of martyr-blood, we see them (the christians) burnt, crucified, decapitated“; and also Tertullian writes: „some have been tested as Christians by fire, others by the sword, others by wild beasts; others are hungering in prison for martyrdom which they have already tasted by flagellations and racks; we ourselves are already besieged from afar“ (vide Neander, Antign., pp. 14*, and 140). The former churchfather, therefore, rejects and refutes the proposition — for it ran, according to him, literally thus — of the said „heretics“ that „the confession of God by death was nothing different from, or better than, *downright suicide*“, as one of their very heresies, i. e. heterodox errors, and brands it as one of their *δσι-
λίας σοφίσματα*. He also says of them stigmatizingly: *ἀσεβῶς ἄμα
καὶ δειλῶς φιλοζωοῦσι*.

Secondly, however, Clemens notices and discusses likewise the case of those christians — there being, as he admits, some such in his day — who denounce themselves, and in a certain fashion, like the Gymnosophists of the Indians (this apt and true illustration belongs to him, as we shall presently see), boast of violently seeking death; and he does not hesitate to concede that the martyrdom of such as purposely seek death from hatred to the body and to life may be justly identified with suicide, since the real value of martyrdom consists rather in proving the ascendancy of spiritual over sensual nature, the liberty of the mind in the midst of sufferings, and contempt of death from love unto God, and the genuine Christians are *witnesses* to divine truth in all their actions, and they also can arrive at the true Life only through the medium of bodily life. „But also we say that those who seek death on purpose (*ἐπιτηθήσαντας τῷ θανάτῳ*) — for, there are some not of us, having only the name in common with us, who endeavor to give themselves up (*οἱ δὲ αὐτοὺς παραδιδόντες σπεύδουσι*) and, as miserable ones, desire to die from hatred to the Demiurgos —; but we say that such rid themselves of life (*ἐξάγειν ἑαυτοὺς*¹⁾) unmartyrlikely (*ἀμαρτύρως*), and even

¹⁾ We have seen more than once in earlier portions of our Treatise that this is the technical Stoic and Neo-Platonic expression for *suicide*; and I may

though they be publicly tortured. For, they do not preserve the character of genuine martyrdom (οὐ γὰρ τὸν χαρακτήρα σώζουσι τοῦ μαρτυρίου τοῦ πιστοῦ), inasmuch as they have not known the veritable God, but give themselves up to a vain death (θανάτῳ δὴ ἐαυτοὺς ἀποδιδόασιν κενῷ), as likewise the Gymnosophists of the Indians foolishly throw themselves into the fire." — What hereupon follows immediately in this same fourth book about the harmony and necessary nexus between soul and body, and how the two co-operate towards a good life which will lead unto a good death also (an echo of the Platonico-Pythagorean theory), as well as what in a later portion thereof Clemens endeavors to prove to the effect that Jesus, verily, did not suffer in consequence of God's all-arranging system, and that those who are persecuted are not persecuted according to the will of God, such things rather merely happening in so far as God does not prevent them (μὴ κωλύσαντος τοῦ Θεοῦ) — the reader must be left to peruse and ponder for himself, since it no longer bears directly upon the question which we are now solely investigating.

That, however, Tertullian, one of whose anti-Gnostic writings I have above alluded to, thought very differently from Clemens on this latter point, more especially after he had become a Montanist I need, perhaps, scarcely state; for, it is well known that the Montanists as a body considered anything resembling flight from martyrdom absolutely objectionable.¹⁾ It is true, there are passages in Tertullian's writings which seem to intimate that, though not to flee be right, yet to flee is still better; but, in other passages, this same churchfather unmistakeably asserts that to flee is wrong, that, indeed, non-flight is the only christian mode of action, inasmuch as that injunction of Jesus' which I mentioned on §. 62 of §. 66 possessed a *merely temporary and local* validity. (The Gnostics, on the contrary, referred yon other injunction to a confession *not before men, but before the Aeons!*) And, indeed, when we find among many similar almost delirium-wrung exclamations of his such words as the following ones: „aye, wish not to die on your beds, in a

here annotate that Clemens himself (p. 576) employs it thus more specifically when speaking incidentally of certain Pagan philosophers who εὐλογον ἐμὴν τῷ σπουδαίῳ συγχωροῦσι under certain circumstances. ¹⁾ Vide Ritschl: *Entstehung der christlichen Kirche*, 1850, pp. 510—514.

bor-pains, or of effeminate fever, but wish to die *as martyrs* (in martyrriis), that He may be glorified who has suffered for you“, it would be foolish to doubt his hearty dissent, at a certain period of his life at least, from one portion of his cotemporary's just mentioned strictures. — Indeed, since Tertullian, as far as a not exactly hasty skimming of all his writings enables me to judge, nowhere makes *direct* mention of the question of suicide in either a theoretical or a practical point of view, I should not have introduced the above quotation at all, had it not afforded me an opportunity of placing before the reader a few comments thereon by Neander (Antignost., p. 124) which are as profound as they are delicate, and which to suppress would be doing violence to my own feelings, and to an object I would fain never lose sight of also in this §, viz. that of pronouncing *humanly* on would-be *super-human* spiritualities of one sort or another. „Man erkennt hier den unevangelischen Schwärmergeist des Montanismus. Wenn gleich ein christliches Gefühl sich hier ausdrückt, so hat dies doch eine ganz verschrobene Richtung genommen. Das reine Christenthum vernichtet nicht, sondern verkärt alles natürlich Menschliche mit allen seinen Gefühlen und Schwächen. Diese falsche Schaam menschlicher Schwäche schmeckt mehr nach stoischem oder ascetischem Hochmuth, nach dem Hochmuth eines indischen Saniah, als nach dem demüthigen und zarten Geiste des ächten Christenthums. Als ob der Christ nicht auch in der Schwäche, unter den langsamten Leiden des Krankenlagers durch kindliche Ergebung Gott verherrlichen, von seinem Erlöser zeugen könnte, desto wahrhafter, je weniger er hier seinen eigenen Willen thut, je mehr er sich vielleicht viel zu wirken sehnt, je stiller und anspruchsloser! So mischt sich leicht in den Eifer einer solchen aufgeschraubten, das christliche Zartgefühl unterdrückenden, betriebsamen Frömmigkeit Eigenwille, Hochmuth und Eitelkeit ein.“

III. Athanasius (†. 373).

The life of this churchfather, whose name has become among ourselves principally and unenviably bound up with a Creed which he, we are assured, did *not* compose, it not having existed until some fifty years after his death, and in which an early christian patriarch of Constantinople imagined himself seeing the production of a „drunken man“ (vide e.g. Gibbon's Decl. and Fall, ch. XXXVII, note 114, and the references there given), was, so to speak, an almost continuous series of flights from persecutions, either the Arian

or the Julianic. Arian bishops, however, having bitterly reproached him with one of the said flights of his, he believed himself bound to justify himself in reference to his procedure, and, therefore, composed the elaborate „apologia de fuga sua, cum a Syriano Duce persecutionem pateretur“, which performance, as Zozomen tells us (H. E. lib. V, c. 12), he read publicly in the council of Alexandria. Its main object was to prove that, in keeping with sound argumentation and practical reason as well as with the clear admonition and express example of Jesus himself, it was both a matter of duty and of expediency to evade the danger of death by flight, since in general those who acted otherwise either *committed* (mediate) *suicide*, or omitted to prevent others from committing murder, and since *particularly teachers ought to preserve themselves for the benefit of their congregations*.

First of all, however, we will concentrate our attention upon the few items which here more immediately concern us. Athanasius declares¹⁾ that to offer one's self to the persecutors ἀπλῶς is tantamount to *killing one's self*, to rendering one's self guilty of one's own death, and to combatting against the Lord (καὶ ἀντιπρᾶξαι τῷ κυρίῳ): on which occasion he quotes the words of Jesus (Matth. XIX, 6): „what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder“, as if they could by any possibility be conceived as an argument against suicide. But, surely, the union and the divorce of husband and wife are in no wise a very felicitous and striking analogon of the union and divorce of soul and body (vide §. 65); and, indeed, very many similar erroneous and capricious applications of passages of the New Testament, in consequence of utter neglect of the context and occasion in and on which they were uttered, may be found in the churchfathers: thus, for instance, Tertullian on one occasion says in so many words: „Christ disarmed all soldiers, when he took from Peter the sword“, by way of proving that Christians might not perform military duty. Though some of the Martyrs, Athanasius proceeds, did give themselves up to their persecutors, they, nevertheless, did so οὐχ ἀπλῶς (ὅτι μήτε ἑαυτοὺς ἀπλῶς προσῆγον, τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ἑαυτὸν ἀποκτείνειν κ. τ. λ.), it being manifest to all who were present at their martyr-death which they suffered without repugnance, that both their προθυμία and their

¹⁾ Opera, edit. Bened., 1698, T. I, pars I, pp. 330, 333, §§. 17 and 22.

πρόσδος were a work of the Holy Spirit (παρὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος). Here, however, our apologist would seem to me to have been slightly or sadly in error concerning historical data; for suchlike, as we have already seen in §. 66 and shall, perhaps, hear again in the sequel, was sometimes very far from being manifest either to the official agents of the persecutions or to the philosophical writers on the persecutions, among the cotemporary Heathen.

We now return to say a few words on the general inhold of the said Athanasian Apology, as far as flight from persecution is concerned. The ecclesiastical historian Sokrates has filled several pages (H. E. lib. III, c. 8) of his accurate and simple narrative with quotations from it, some of which shall here find a place. „In short, the Arians overlook the fact that while they pretend to upbraid us with fear, they are really criminating themselves: for, if it be disgraceful to flee, it is still more so to pursue, since the one is only endeavoring to avoid being murdered, while the other is seeking to commit the deed. But, Scripture itself directs us to flee: and those who persecute unto death, in attempting to violate the law, constrain us to have recourse to flight. They should rather therefore be ashamed of their persecution than reproach us for having sought to escape from it: let them but cease to harass us, and we shall have no cause to abscond. Nevertheless, they set no bounds to their malevolence, using every art to entrap us, in the consciousness that the flight of the persecuted is the strongest condemnation of the persecutor; for no one runs away from a mild and beneficent person, but from one who is of a barbarous and cruel disposition. He then, after having alluded to Jacob's flight from Esau, Moses' from Pharaoh, David's from Saul, Elijah's from Ahab and Jezebel, Paul's from the governor of Damascus, to the O. T. Cities of Refuge, Jesus' flight into Egypt from Herod, into Nazareth from Archelaus, and on sundry other occasions, e. g. Matth. XII, 13—15, John XI, 53, 54, X, 39, 40, continues thus. „There is then a rational and consistent cause for retreat and flight under such circumstances as these, of which the Evangelists have afforded us precedents in the conduct of our Saviour himself from which it may be inferred that the saints have always been justly influenced by the same principle, since whatever is recorded of him as a man is applicable to mankind in general.“

And, here we will pause for one moment to look around us in

search of what some of the other Churchfathers thought and said touching this same question.

Cyprian, fleeing from his episcopal see at Carthage during the most blood-stained persecution of Decius, thus taught his sentiments by his own conduct, like Athanasius himself; but most of his cotemporary christians would seem to have held it to be, at least, more faithful and more meritorious to remain stedfast at one's post during persecution, and, therefore, to have taken his flight in evil part; for he subsequently excused his behaviour by affirming that God had revealed to him (he was, in general, inclined to superstition and pious visionariness) in advance this persecution and had bid him flee. A better excuse, however, are, I ween, those epistles of exhortation, instruction, consolation and advice which he addressed to his flock from the place of his retreat; and his later martyr-death (anno 258) is sufficient proof of the sincerity and courage of his faith. — Also Zozomen, in the 5th century, when recounting (H. E. V, 10) the persecutions under Julian, tells us that the monk St. Hilarion „only escaped martyrdom by flight; for he fled in compliance with the divine precept which commands us not to expose ourselves to persecution; but that, if we fall into the hands of the persecutors, to overcome by our own fortitude the violence of our oppressors.“ — Hieronymus, on the contrary, manifestly pronounces flight blameable; and his voice is so important that I will quote his ipsissima verba. „In Martyre enim voluntas, ex qua ipsa mors nascitur, coronatur. Meum est, opponere me gentilium furori, et Dominum non negare. Jam in illorum arbitrio est, aut decollare, aut urere, aut recludere in carcerem, aut varia adhibere genera poenarum. Quod si fugero, et in solitudine obiero, nec eadem erit corona morientis, quia non eadem caussa mortis est Christus“ (vide the second book of his sharp and violent controversial treatise against the heretic Jovinian, to which we shall have to revert at some length, when we come to speak of this churchfather's views on suicide). — Whereas his more than equally renowned and influential cotemporary fellow-churchfather, Augustinus, most emphatically enjoins flight as a duty, referring his readers not only to the Saviour's precepts, but, what is far more singular, even to the case of a biblical suicide. „Fugam praecipit quem vocatis Salvatorem, fugam permittit persecutor. Interrogate Christum, jubet vos fugere; interrogare Tribunal, permittit vos fugere. Si et ipsum Rariam in-

terrogare possetis, responderet vobis, Ego non potui fugere“ (vide lib. I, p. 456 of his treatise contra Gaudentium Donatist. episc.). — Finally, the most celebrated pupil of Clemens of Alexandria, Origenes, touching whom we learn from Eusebius' lively portrayal (H. E. VI, 2, 4, 5) that when still a youth he, too, cherished a vehement desire and manifested an almost childish eagerness for the martyr-crown, which his own father Leonidas obtained, and which very many of his catechumens also more or less willingly won, yet, (as Clemens himself had fled, besides commending flight), after he was become a matured man, considered Jesus to have commanded careful withdrawal of one's self from persecution, and illustrated this precept, and enforced this duty, in numerous passages of his writings, though this conviction was very far from preventing, or even interfering with, a pre-eminent reverence for, and a hyper-valuation of, martyrdom on the part of our so enthusiastic and mystical church-father, to some of whose utterances about the intercessory efficacy of martyrs at the altar of God in the mansions of bliss the first germs of that subsequent so foolish and fatal (catholic) dogma of the opera supererogationis of the saints are, according to all appearances, traceable.

Be these few testimonies which I have extracted almost at random from the materials I had collected, sufficient to show how divergent the votes of the early church were on even so practical a question as the one we have just been touching upon.

IV. Eusebius († 340).

The tone of this father of church-history's narrative, when he is recounting (vide §. 69) the commission of suicide from the fear of apostasy, would *seem, if anything*, to convey his own approbation; inasmuch, however, as no other churchfather comments at all on cases of this description, or even alludes to them (except perhaps Augustinus), I will here intercalate some few such annotations on this phenomenon as must, if I mistake not, pretty speedily suggest themselves to every thinking mind.

1. I will not urge the perfecting influence which the actual endurance of the trial might reasonably be presumed to exercise upon the sufferer himself: a passing reflection which everybody can pursue for himself. 2. It is not by any means a forced supposition, when we suggest that the great cause might lose somewhat by the adherent's premature voluntary flight from the test awaiting him and

required of him. If, namely, on the one hand Pagan judges and spectators were, doubtless, occasionally moved to reverence and even to embrace a faith to which witness was calmly and uncompromisingly borne unto the last, a suicidal anticipation of the threatened ordeal was, on the other hand, anything but unlikely to engender a suspicion that the accused had no genuine heroic confidence in his own faith, nay, that the cause to which he professed adherence, dreaded in some measure the full light of an open and a decisive experiment: just as, for instance, we now-a-days should incline to augur ill of any suit on the part of a defendant who evaded a public judicial trial by a self-inflicted death (cf. what was said in §. 35 on the Roman Laws of the time in reference to the suicide of a person arraigned). 3. If a compulsory, torture-extracted recantation of faith be viewed as a sin from the commission of which to escape even by suicide itself, is justifiable and, haply, praiseworthy, longer and more varied than such a trial the *test of life* in general, especially when environed by pagan influences, could not but appear unto many; and, thence, if to flee by suicide from the temptations to apostasy were warrantable, to flee by the same sudden and violent medium from the pollutions of sin could scarcely fail to have appeared a fortiori justifiable unto such as believed or felt themselves too weak to stand successfully the said life-test: on which matter also we may have to say a few words by and by. 4. Perfect confidence in God ought, we should think, to have bid those early christians hope and believe that He would afford unto them strength sufficient for bearing victoriously the trials from which they thus had shrunk; and, moreover, thorough insight into the true nature of genuine morality might, as we think, have convinced them that even an abjuration of faith forced upon them by such tortures as their physical frame could not any longer endure, in spite of the mind's and heart's holiest purpose to the contrary, is and must be pardonable in the sight of Him who regards only what is the essential element and moment of Religion in man, i. e. the purpose which is in human power, and not the deed which is not, and cannot always be, accomplishable even by the firmest will when encased in a frail and delicate external framework. What of sin and crime is thus committed, must for far the greater part be pronounced to lie at the door of the tempter, not at that of the succumber.

Far more decidedly favorable, however, is the tone in which our bishop of Caesarea recounts yon instances of suicide for the purpose of evading violation. But, inasmuch as several of those later churchfathers whom we shall have to mention almost immediately, discuss this matter at far greater length and with still more marked approval and admiration, I will *here* merely draw attention to two points which have appeared to me worthy of note in Eusebius' passing remarks.

1. He claims too much for the Christians, when he seems exclusively to intimate that they alone are capable of, and ready to make, a sacrifice of life under the circumstances and for the reasons under mention. The same motive, rather, has in all ages, nations and religions frequently superinduced the identical deed. Paganism and Christianity have in this matter commingled, if not their elements, yet their influences. That the former should have occupied a more or less *outward* position to Sin, as far as this term may be said to have been, in its deeper import, fully know to it, although its virtues were very far from being, as Augustinus maintained, „splendid vices“; that it should not have *practically* recognized to the needful extent that Sin of any kind is not a thing of *matter*, but rather of the Spirit, must not surprise us over-much: was not early Christianity itself also somewhat defective still in this latter particular? Thence, wheresoever female chastity was really valued, e. g. among the ancient Romans and the ancient Germans and sundry other Teutonic or Celtic tribes in the best ages of their history, females *in a body*, as it were, not infrequently, more especially in times of warfare and in cases of siege and captivity, slew themselves rather than become exposed to the lusts of a victorious soldiery. Pretty numerous instances will at once occur to every student of history, e. g. that of those German women whose request to be received and treated as Vestals the victor Marius refused,¹⁾ or, that of the women of Miletus during the Gallic invasion, whose resolve the well-known Greek epigram²⁾ of some unknown poet has immortalized: instances which are quite parallel to those of modern christian ages, when e. g. in the thirty years' war the people of Pomerania affirmed³⁾ anno 1630 in their complaints about Wallen-

¹⁾ Florus, lib. II, c. 3. ²⁾ Anthologiae Graecae, lib. III, titulus XXII, epigr. 28, T. II, p. 214 of de Bosch's edit. with Hugo Groot's Latin version.
³⁾ Raumer, Geschichte Europa's, B. III, p. 481.

stein's army that „maidens, to escape violation, had leapt out of their windows“, or, during the cruel and infamous doings of the Cossacks, Calmucks and Tartars in the Prussian States during the seven years' war, as Archenholtz assures us, ¹⁾ „viele Frauenpersonen brachten sich um's Leben, um dem viehischen Umgestüm zu entgehen.“ To quote *individual* examples from ancient Pagan as from modern Christian story would be easy, but is not here necessary, and is at all times rather painful than edifying.

2. But yet, although this same motive had its lauded prototypes in both classical and barbaric Paganism, there was a very considerable difference in this matter between those ancient Pagans and those early Christians. The view taken by the former was, doubtless, so to speak, an external, a social, a domestic one solely; they thought quite humanly and femininely only of their own personal degradation, of the insult offered to their nation, neither reasoning nor caring much about the relation of spirit to matter, nor speculating in any manner about future high rewards: and their act, albeit the offspring of an error, remains in its unadulterated humanness and single-heartedness really beautiful, loveably glorious. The view taken by the latter, on the contrary, allied itself very intimately to their own peculiar, extravagant, mystical ideas and sentiments regarding Virginity, and was thus theologically and mystically motivated and colored. Nor is it by any means difficult to trace that view to its source, as, indeed, it has often been already traced. Every reader, namely, of the writings of the O. T., especially the prophetic ones, is aware of the perpetually recurring anthropomorphistic metaphor according to which Jehovah is the jealous spouse of the *collective* Israelitish church, and, therefore, every other God, false Deity, Idol a mere paramour whom to worship was an act of adultery or harlotry. There the *tertium comparationis* was the *wedded* state. In the Gospels and Epistles of the N. T., however, when the same image is re-introduced and dwelt upon, again with regard to the *collective* Christian church in her position to Christ, the *betrothed* state is substituted for the state of marriage, and unfaith in respect of Jesus, all faith in any pseudo-Messiah, is represented as idolatrous infidelity, as a breach of the covenant of love unto Christ. Whereas, however, under the Jewish dispensation the notion of na-

¹⁾ Geschichte des siebenjährigen Kriegs in Deutschland, Aufl. 4, p. 95.

tional collectiveness was perpetually held fast, and, consequently, if we except, perhaps, the latish Essenes and Therapeuts, who had, as we have seen, ceased to be purely Jewish, wedlock always remained a most desired and honored form of social and religious life among the Hebrews, and offspring was numbered among the choicest blessings from Jehovah, the Christian economy began at a very early period already to apply the simile at issue to *individuals* in a literal and mystical sense, thereto induced, partly, by the figurative wording of some utterances of Jesus, which ought to have been understood *comparatively* only, not absolutely, and, partly, by Paul's manifest preference of unmarried life, which ought to have been viewed either as something merely *temporary* or as a *constitutional* bias of his own, and, partly, by sundry very highly wrought passages in the Apocalypsis which themselves already manifestly abet an error which subsequently, and indeed very soon, became as pernicious as it was unwarranted, despite all the proofs in favor thereof which many of the churchfathers would fain derive from, among much else, e. g. such data as these: that a virginal body bore Jesus, Jesus himself did not marry, John the Baptist, Paul &c. remained unmarried: proofs which, if closely inspected without prejudice, prove nothing at all that could in the smallest degree even favor, much less support, what many of the early Fathers were so eager to establish and propagate, viz. the foregoing of all earthly love, the repulsion of every sexual union, the divine sublimity of, and an extravagant reverence for, conventual, absolute, anti-natural abstinence, only misnamed, we may justly say, chastity which is not of the body only or chiefly, but rather of the heart and the spirit, as even an Augustinus, when discussing (vide further on in this §) that motive which more specifically occasioned suicide among the early christian women, rightly divined and judged.

Of course, purity and holiness Christianity did prescribe, and NB. to both sexes equally, not allowing unto men what it forbade unto women, which fact our modern Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the great European cities would do well to bear in mind, even though they should forget thereover two thirds of such catechism-dogmata, which, after all, they did not comprehend, and could not examine, as were drummed and drilled into their juvenile brains at so-called religious schools which are advertized as being opened and closed morning and afternoon with so-called prayer, and

in which a reverend gentleman duly gives day by day so-called divinity-lessons to senior and junior classes, thereby wasting much time which ought to be devoted to far more fruitful class-work. But, purity and holiness are, as before said, internal, not external, matters, and fall by a vast deal short of being synonymous with, let alone less momentous than, virginity and celibacy. The body cannot, properly speaking, sin, unless the soul precede it, and never does sin, unless by the former called upon to do so. — Why, then, should I request the reader to listen to the perfectly ridiculous, and sometimes even disgusting, images and parallels by force of which many of the churchfathers endeavor to exalt the said virginity and celibacy? To learn that, for instance, according to Cyprian, virginity is the sixtyfold fruit of christian meritoriousness? Or, that, according to Ambrosius, chastity makes angels, that who has preserved it, is an angel? Or, that, according to Chrysostomos, virginity is even to be preferred to the life of the angels, because it necessitates the overcoming of manifold incitements unto sin to which the angels are not exposed? — —

V. Lactantius († 325).

Ere we proceed to the four Fathers *par excellence*, Ambrosius, Hieronymus, Chrysostomos, and Augustinus, we must pay some little attention to this formerly pagan, but subsequently christian, rhetor whose clear eloquence and pure latinity are calculated, we believe, to afford considerable pleasure to such as would fain discover and enjoy something like aesthetical scholarship even in patristic literature, but whose so-called orthodoxy — and he chanced to remain a layman — can scarcely be said to bear the test of even a hasty perusal of that chief performance of his from which we have quoted already in §§. 3, 6, 24, and which heré again alone calls for our attention. I allude, of course, to his *Institutiones divinae*, a work in 7 books, in which elaborate production, dedicated to Constantine the Great, to whose unfortunate son, Crispus, he was tutor, he undertook, by way of refuting Paganism and defending Christianity, to represent the latter in what he considered to be the divine purity and reasonableness of its moral teachings more especially, and thus led his readers from the history of the Creation through the life and work of Christ unto the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment of the world. His *absolutely anti-suicidal* arguments occur in the third book, when he is discussing the necessity of the

connexion between religion and wisdom, immortality as the supreme good, virtue as the road to immortality, and catechizing, attacking, and rejecting the axioms and inferences of those pagan philosophers who had enjoyed the highest reputation among the Greeks and Romans, more especially Epikurism (materialism), Pythagorism and Stoicism (pre-existence and metempsychosis), Sokratism (admitted necessary ignorance or foolish indifference: „quod supra nos, nihil ad nos“), Platonism, &c. I have in those earlier §§ stated and shown that and why the said anti-suicidal arguments do not appear to me either exactly original or always very valuable and correct, and may, therefore, content myself with now adding a few of the principal passages to those I have extracted on former occasions. „Nam sicut in hanc vitam non nostra sponte venimus, ita rursus ex hoc domicilio corporis, quod tuendum nobis assignatum est, ejusdem jussu recedendum est, qui nos in hoc corpus induxit, tamdiu habituros, donec jubeat emitti; et si vis aliqua inferatur, aequa mente patiendum est, cum extincta innocentis anima, inulta esse non possit, habeamusque iudicem magnum, cui soli vindicta in integro semper est. De vita quereris, quasi vixeris, aut unquam tibi ratio constiterit, cur omnino sis natus. Nonne igitur tibi verus ille et communis omnium pater Terentianum illud (Heautontim. 5, 2. 18s) jure increpaverit: Prius disce, quid sit vivere: si displicebit vita, tum istoc utitor. Indignaris te malis esse subjectum, quasi quidquam merearis boni, qui patrem, qui dominum, qui regem tuum nescis; qui quamvis clarissimam lucem intuearis oculis, mente tamen caecus es, et in profundis ignorantiae tenebris jaces.“

By way of appendix to these passages of Instt. Divinae, lib. III, c. 18, in med., I will also introduce what is to be found on our topic in the Epitome of them (c. 39, in fin.), a work which some believe also to have had Lactantius himself for its author.¹⁾ Having launched out e. g. against Aristippos for placing the supreme good in sensual pleasure, he proceeds thus. „An illi fortiores magis sunt probandi, qui ut mortem contempsisse dicerentur, voluntariam necem sibi intulerunt, Zeno, Empedocles, Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Democritus, et hos imitatus Cato: nec scierunt, homicidii crimine teneri secundum jus legemque divinam eum, qui se interfecerit? Deus enim

¹⁾ O. F. Fritzsche has also included this same epitome divinarum institutionum ad Pentadium Fratrem in his somewhat recent edition of Lactantius' collective works, Lipsiae, 1842—44.

nos in hoc domicellium carnis induxit; ille nobis temporale corporis habitaculum dedit, ut incolamus, quamdiu idem voluerit. Nefas igitur habendum est, sine dei jussu velle migrare. Non est ergo vis adhibenda naturae. Scit ille, quemadmodum opus suum resolvat. Cui operi si quis manus impias adhibuerit, ac divini opificii vincula diruperit, deum conatur effugere, cujus sententiam nec vivus ququam, nec mortuus poterit evadere. Scelerati ergo et nefarii, quos superius nominavi, qui etiam docuerunt, quas causas habere debeat mors voluntaria; ut parum sit sceleris, quod homicidae in semetipsos exstiterunt, nisi ad hoc nefas et alios erudirent.“

VI. Ambrosius († 397).

If we except the narrator himself (Eusebius), the dauntless bishop of Milan is the first churchfather who presents himself before us with a verdict on suicide, if committed for the purpose of anticipating such violence as was likely to be offered by the brutal lusts of Pagan persecutors. — Assuming or admitting that, as a matter of course, *the Holy Scriptures forbid suicide*, he, nevertheless, does not hesitate to approve and extol, with palpable warmth of feeling and such rhetoric as he could master, those virgins and matrons, to whom allusion was made in §. 69, as holy and meritorious martyrs, and to view their deed as an extraordinary and all-sufficient baptism. Upon the whole, indeed, he was an exceedingly enthusiastic defender of virginity and chastity, as everybody may quickly discover by reading even only that treatise from which we shall forthwith quote, and which, written at the request of sundry virgins, and dedicated to his own sister, who had also taken the conventual vow of everlasting chastity, is, properly speaking, nothing but a panegyric on the excellence and holiness of unwedded maidhood.

This same sister of his, apparently somewhat perplexed about the very question at issue, would seem to have desired, in a direct manner, instruction from him touching the suicidal end of Pelagia, or, in general, of such virgins or matrons as had inflicted death upon themselves from the same motive.¹⁾ „Jam ad finem orationis vela pandenti bene suggeris, soror sancta, quid de earum meritis existimandum sit, quae se praecipitavere ex alto, vel in fluvium demerserunt, ne in persecutorum inciderent manus; cum scriptura di-

¹⁾ De virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem suam, lib. III, c. 7, Opera, ed. Bened. T. II, pp. 182, 183.

vina vim sibi Christianum prohibeat inferre. Et quidem de Virgini-
nibus in necessitate custodiæ constitutis enodem habemus adsentio-
nem, cum martyrii exstet exemplum." His reply, with which he
winds up his work, is not couched philosophically, nor does he argue
the question on scriptural grounds, but simply adduces and details
sundry examples, bringing forward some of the last orations or ori-
sons of the self-doomed heroines. He, doubtless, knew, as an ex-
perienced teacher and guide of suchlike more or less weak and
imaginative females, that highly wrought descriptions of actual in-
stances of pertinent enthusiasm and heroism in this direction were
likely to prove far more effectual and convincing unto them than
even the most elaborate arguments, though taken from Holy Writ
itself; and, therefore, we cannot but believe ourselves perfectly war-
ranted in inferring from his high-flown, almost, as it were, artifi-
cially worked up delineations of the said heroines, his own perfect
assent to their suicidal deaths. The case of a certain Pelagia figures
first in the list. Who was she? It is, perhaps, somewhat difficult
to answer this question with critical accuracy. Turning to a French
work with a mightily long title,²⁾ we find s. d. IX Juin among
much else the following biographical particulars of her. She was a
young girl of Antioch, about fifteen years of age, who had been
instructed at the school of the celebrated martyr Saint Lucian, a
priest of Antioch. Zeal and piety distinguished her already then in
such wise that during the persecution instituted against the Chris-
tians in that city by the order of Emperor Maximin, arraigners were
found who denounced her to the magistracy under her own name,
although she was in the power of her relatives, and still under the
care of a governess. The judge, informed of her singular beauty,
conceived for her „une passion brutale“, of which Maximin was
wont to set the example to all his officials. To gratify it, he de-
termined to have Pelagia carried off, under the pretext of her being
a Christian, of which fact she was, consequently, accused. The sol-
diers whom he dispatched to her house for this purpose, took no-
tice of the time when everybody, or, at least, those who would have
been able to oppose their design, had gone out of the house: and

¹⁾ Les vies des Saints, composées sur ce qui nous est resté de plus au-
tentique et de plus assuré dans leur Histoire, disposées selon l'ordre des Ca-
lendriers et des Martyrologues, avec l'histoire de leur culte, selon qu'il est
établi dans l'Eglise Catholique, nouvelle édit., Paris, 1739, T. IV, pp. 622—634.

they found her quite alone in her chamber. The exertions which they had made to break open her door, and the insolence with which they approached (or, addressed) her, led her to understand that they had a design upon either her honor or her life. Having soon recovered from the surprise which such violence of theirs had caused to her, she did not take fright at all at seeing them place hands upon her to lead her away, because, being upheld by her faith, she hoped that God who had filled her heart with his love, would suggest to her some means of deliverance from the misfortune which menaced her. She spoke to them with a freedom and a presence of mind which astonished them; and the slight resistance she offered to them, made them believe that she was sufficiently disposed to follow them, and that she would readily comply with the desire of him who had sent them, and who had apparently commissioned them to disguise from her his passions beneath other appearances. Nevertheless, she was not to be deceived. She came down with them without giving them cause for any suspicions whatsoever. But, finding herself deprived of all human succour, and seeing only death now to shield her against the brutality of the persecutor, she believed that God permitted her to seek it, and to anticipate even the sword of her executioners which she viewed as a remedy that would come only after the blow (meaning violation, I presume) had been inflicted. Scarcely had she left the house, when she, bethinking herself of a ruse for eluding the soldiers who surrounded her, begged of them to allow her to return to her chamber for the purpose of attiring herself, in order that she might not appear before a person of such consideration in unseemly dress (*un habit indécent*). They believed her, and willingly granted her the liberty she had requested, being resolved to wait for her at the door. Having thus disengaged herself from their hands, she forthwith went up into her chamber, and thence upon the roof, from which she flung herself down upon the pavement.

She thus triumphed at one and the same time over her own weakness and over the vain efforts of her enemies. The soldiers, terrified by so surprising a spectacle, went to carry the tidings thereof to the judge who was quite confounded thereby. Vexation at having been in this manner defied induced him to avenge himself for it on the mother and the sisters of her who had been the cause of his confusion. He sent the soldiers back again to seize them, and gave

the former all necessary instructions for preventing the escape of the latter out of their hands. They had, however, already betaken themselves out of the city, being well aware that the vengeance of the persecutor would fall upon them. The soldiers pursued them; and, when they found themselves stopped by the river which closed their path, they took hold of each other by the hand and precipitated themselves into the water, clasping one another closely. It is thus that these died whom Saint Ambrosius calls the mother and the sisters of Saint Pelagia. But, what took place with them bears, in some particulars at least, so much resemblance to what happened to Saint Domnina and her two daughters, Saint Bernice and Saint Prosdoce, that one has every reason to believe that Saint Ambrosius might have fallen in with some defective account of their martyrdom, or, that he wished to lay too much stress upon his own conjecture in taking Domnina for the mother, and Bernice and Prosdoce for the sisters, of Saint Pelagia. — —

Perhaps, I shall have tired the reader with this translation of our French Hagiographer's minute recital; but, it seemed to me to deserve being here introduced for sundry reasons. Firstly, since we shall have to revert to the specific case of Pelagia, when we come to discuss the *canonization* of suicides by the Catholic Church, it was more or less needful that we should make ourselves acquainted with her history. Secondly, since the dicta not only of Ambrosius, but also of Chrysostomos, on our special subject concern her more particularly, it was but just that we should preliminarily learn what we could about her. Thirdly, much controversy has been raised by Catholic writers touching the identity or non-identity of the personages meant by Eusebius, Ambrosius, and Chrysostomos, and much ingenuity expended by them to account for and reconcile certain discrepancies in the respective narratives.¹⁾ And, finally, this same confusion and uncertainty respecting even such prominent early martyrs and saints may enable us to estimate rightly the measure of credence which is due to the annals of ecclesiastical martyrology in general.

Now, at length, returning to Ambrosius' above mentioned treatise, it will suffice for our present purpose to quote one or two sentences which he lets Pelagia and Domnina utter immediately before the execution of their purpose, and to which he himself palpably

1) Vide Bollandi Acta Sanctorum, 1698, die nona Junii, pp. 156, 157.

subscribes. „Moriatur si licet, vel si nolunt licere, moriamur. *Deus remedio non offenditur, et facinus fides ablevat.*“ „Ecce aqua, quis nos baptizari prohibet? Et hoc baptismus est, quo peccata donantur, regna quaeruntur. Et hoc baptismus est, post quod nemo relinquit. Exciat nos aqua, quae regenerare consuevit. Exciat nos aqua, quae virgines facit. Exciat nos aqua, quae coelum aperit, infirmos tegit, mortem abscondit, martyres reddit“, &c. &c. — Also, however, on another occasion,¹⁾ our churchfather in his own name and of his own accord exclaims: „*Quid sublimius Sancta Pelagiá?*“ quae vallata a persecutoribus, priusquam tamen in eorum conspectum veniret, aiebat: Velens morior, nemo me contingit manu, nemo oculo protervo violabit virginem. Mecum feram pudorem, mecum incolumem verecundiam. *Pelagia Christum sequetur: libertatem nemo auferet*“, &c. &c.

Only one brief word in conclusion on the scriptural interdiction of suicide above taken for granted. On the one hand, I have not become aware that Ambrosius was here bearing in mind any special passage of either the O. T., e. g. that passage in Job on which we commented in Sect. IV, or the N. T., e. g. any one of those passages which we adduced in this Sect. On the other hand, however, it is equally clear that he failed to discern, or was unwilling to acknowledge, any countenance of suicide in e. g. the divine assistance claimed for Samson in the O. T. book of Judges, or, in the unbroken silence of the N. T. on our topic. Most probable it would appear to me that he, like the later Augustinus, saw such interdiction in the Decalogue, as far as the O. T. was concerned, and that, as regards the N. T., he, very far from reproaching it, as some modern thinkers have done, with defectiveness and incompleteness on this score, even if all that Jesus spoke had been written down, or, all that the Apostles wrote had been preserved, found therein such interdiction, like sundry other prohibitions or commandments, as we ourselves have endeavored to do, *κατὰ διανοίαν*, though not *κατὰ πρῶτον*. — His supposition, therefore, though not by him proved, is not on that account the less true.

VII. Chrysostomos († 407).

If the reader will kindly revert to §. 6, p. 51 and §. 63, pp. 11, 12, he will find two passages from this ecclesiastical Demosthenes'

¹⁾ Epist. 37 ad Simplicianum, T. II, p. 339.

works which abundantly testify to his views on the question under immediate consideration.

Firstly, he condemns suicide per se as decidedly and sweepingly as any christian moralist possibly could do, nay, he even trespasses beyond the legitimate bounds of calm argumentation in his effort to denounce and to check it. As regards this view of his, I will merely add one other passage from one of his writings¹⁾ which, though extant only in a Latin version, is I believe pretty generally admitted to be, nevertheless, genuine. After having just introduced 1 Tim. II, 11, he ibidem says what follows. „Nec hoc ego dico, ut quis manus sibi inferat, aut se interficiat contra voluntatem Dei creatoris, aut animam ut de corporis sui expellat hospitio; sed hoc dico, ut laetus et gaudens, cum“, &c. — Very instructive, however, is also his consolatory address to a young man, Stagirius by name, who, having become a monk and been in the same convent at Antioch with Chrysostomos himself, felt himself at a certain period strongly tempted to commit suicide; but I am acquainted with its contents only through the medium of the abstract which Neander has communicated in his beautiful monograph on our sainted churchfather.²⁾ Nor may it be improper here also to mention that Chrys. in Hom. 88 on the Gospel of Saint John emphatically says that it is the Devil who induces people to cast themselves down precipices and into abysses.³⁾

Secondly, as was the case with Ambrosius, his verdict on those martyr-heroines who had inflicted death upon themselves for the purpose of protecting and preserving their chastity, is, nevertheless, to the effect that they one and all evinced the highest degree of faith, virtue, holiness by thus preferring rather themselves to rend asunder the bonds of life than to allow that kind and measure of purity to be sullied which their religion was supposed to have prescribed. — It is true, as I already hinted on you earlier occasion, sermons, and more especially panegyrics, are not exactly the fittest vehicles for conveying to us due insight into aught that could be said to resemble the science and system of ethics, since we are bound to make some allowance, not only for the style and license of oratory and the temper or mood of the orator, but also even for occasional accommodation to the characters and wants, nay, haply the preju-

¹⁾ De consolatione mortis, sermo primus, Opera, edid. Montfaucon, T. VI, p. 304 in fin. ²⁾ Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomos und die Kirche, besonders des Orients, in dessen Zeitalter, B. I, pp. 24—29 of edit. 1. ³⁾ T. VIII, p. 526.

dices and passions too, of the hearers. But, this „golden-lipped“ speaker, like many great preachers of modern times, chose to deposit his moral principles and opinions chiefly, perhaps, in such compositions as he delivered from the pulpit, from some of which, then, it is clear that, as before said, he admired with all the power of his enthusiastic spirit the determined deed of such christian females as had preferred direct suicide to the danger of violation, and that he aimed at enshrining such deed in all the magic glow of his proverbial eloquence. Nor does, as far as I can learn, any one utterance in e. g. his more sober commentaries on biblical books warrant us in assuming that he would therein have embodied a modified opinion, had he in them discussed the question at issue.

Whilst most of the Fathers declaimed, somewhat puerilely and presumptuously, as we have seen, about martyr-honors and martyr-recompenses *beyond* the grave, the Church ensured and incorporated, as far as possible, a correspondent measure of martyr-reverence and martyr-glory *on this side* of the tomb. The Practices of the latter were the recognition and manifestation, „the outward and visible sign“ of the Theories of the former. Thus, among other things,¹⁾ the death-days of the Martyrs (called figuratively and significantly *birth-days*, i. e. to a higher and better life: ἡμέραι γενέθλιοι, γενέθλια, dies natales, natalitia), were not only solemnized like Sundays by homilies and eucharist, but additionally by the public rehearsal of the story of their sufferings, and by oblations not merely of prayer, but likewise of laudation and thanksgiving. Thence, we find among Chrysostomos' discourses, beside sundry others delivered on individual martyrs, e. g. Drosis, or, on all martyrs collectively, two on the suicidal Pelagia (the second is extant in Latin only, and extremely brief), and one on the suicidal trefoil Domnina, Bernice, and Prosdoce. From the latter laudatory homily (T. II, 634—645) that startling passage was taken which we discussed on a previous occasion; we will, therefore, here confine ourselves to the first of the two on Pelagia.²⁾

He endeavors to vindicate her suicidal death by postulating as the ultima ratio (vide what was said on this gratuitous hypothesis

¹⁾ Vide principally Bingham's very copious, though badly arranged, communications in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, books XIII, ch. 9, sect. 5, XV, ch. 3, sect. 15, XX, ch. 7, sect. 1—10. ²⁾ For the following quotations and references vide T. II, pp. 586, 588, 589.

on p. 57 ff. of §. 50 in connexion with the case of Samson) hint and aid on the part of God or Jesus (οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἔνδον μόνη, ἔλλ' εἶχε σύμβουλον Ἰησοῦν). „He himself was present, he himself touched her heart, he himself strengthened her courage, he himself expelled her fears.“ She did not act without a just cause (ταῦτα δὲ οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἐποίει). The very immediateness of her death, since a fall from such comparatively low roofs as the houses in the East have, usually does not cause death immediately, was a proof of God's interference and abetment in her case. In his impassioned burst of descriptive eloquence something like the following passages occur. „Therefore, the corpse lay not on a bed, but on the ground. But, it was not without honor, because it lay there; the ground itself, on the contrary, was deserving of reverence, because it had received a corpse dowered with so much glory. And that corpse itself was all the more venerable, because of its lying on the ground.“ „On the ground, then, within a narrow space, lay that virginal body, more precious than gold. Around it the Angels stood, all the Archangels honored it, Christ himself was there.“ „She lay possessed of martyrdom as her grand shroud, adorned with the jewels of confession, entirely enrobed in garments more costly than all regal purple, than any other precious vesture; and in this twofold shroud, of virginity and of martyrdom, she will step before the judgment-seat of Christ.“ And, finally, after this declamatory portion of his address, our churchfather expressly calls upon his auditory to imitate her example: μιμησόμεθα τοίνυν αὐτὴν κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἡμετέραν.

VIII. Hieronymus († 420).

Immediately connected with our present task it will be to annotate that this celebrated coenobite of Bethlehem was wont to insist upon the preservation of virginity and chastity, in general, above and may be at the expense of even the most excellent other virtues (almost the entire treatise against Jovinian, from which I have already quoted, and to which I shall have again to refer, affords more than ample evidence of this fact); for it is, we may say, invariably in connexion with this very matter that we learn his views on suicide. Namely, when commenting on the words (ch. I, v. 12) of the prophet Jonah „take me up, and cast me forth into the sea“, he remarks as follows.¹⁾ „Non est enim nostrum, mortem arripere,

¹⁾ Commentarii in Jonam, Opera, edid. Vallarsius, 1736, T. VI, p. 402.

sed illatam ab aliis libenter excipere. Unde et in persecutionibus non licet propria perire manu, *absque eo ubi castitas periclitatur*; sed percutienti colla submittere.“ One would think that there could not, possibly, be any reasonable doubt or dispute about the opinion expressed in this passage, viz. that suicide is wrong, unchristian, even in times of persecution and suffering, except for the purpose of preventing violence or escaping violation, for which purpose, however, it is not only justifiable, but even (we are warranted, I think, in drawing also this inference) deserving of commendation, admiration, imitation. Yet, strange to say, the very celebrated Benedictine and Divine, Remy Ceillier, has raised a controversy ²⁾ on the words which I have caused to be printed in italics, or, rather, on the meaning of the one word „absque“. And, if I should dwell somewhat long and minutely on this same controversy, let us bear in remembrance that it was our very churchfather who uttered the manly saying: „if offence (scandalum) come out of truth, it is better that offence should be given than that the truth should be hidden.“

Whereas, then, we for our own part cannot but, as before said, conceive the meaning of the passage before us to be: one may not even in times of persecution slay one's self, *except or unless* in cases when or where chastity is endangered, but then or there suicide is permissible and justifiable, Ceillier construes it into the *directly opposite* signification: „not to speak“ of the case when chastity is perilled, in which it is „much less“ permitted to slay one's self! However, it is but just that we should let him speak for himself on so peculiar a point. Here is, first of all, his paraphrastic French version. „C'est pourquoi il n'est point permis de se donner la mort de sa propre main dans les Persécutions, où la Foi est en danger, sans parler du cas où la Chasteté se trouve en péril, dans lequel il est beaucoup moins permis de le faire, mais il est seulement permis de tendre le col à celui qui nous frappe.“ However, he is not so sure of this point that he would not fain give himself another means of escape, wherefore he adds what follows by way of comment. „Supposons que St. Jérôme ait véritablement excepté le cas où la Chasteté est en péril, n'est-il pas juste de croire, ou qu'il l'a fait simplement, parcequ'il n'a pas voulu décider le cas (!!!), ou qu'il n'a approuvé

¹⁾ Apologie de la Morale des Pères de l'Eglise, contré les injustes accusations du Sieur Jean Barbeyrac, 1718, pp. 833—835.

l'action dont il s'agit, que dans la persuasion où il étoit, qu'une si vive horreur d'un Crime, auquel la nature corrompue donne tant de pente, ne peut être que l'effet d'une inspiration particulière de l'esprit de Dieu." Aye, one may „suppose“ anything, though it be utterly ridiculous, absolutely unwarrantable, and the more dishonestly Jesuitical the purpose is which one would compass, the more likely one is to indulge in purely imaginary hypotheses. Here we palpably want demonstration, not mere supposition, nor need we hesitate to affirm that only those who already waver and are themselves only half-persuaded of the soundness of their cause, begin to balance and try to save themselves by such side-leaps as the one we have just witnessed.

The Hugonot Jean Barbeyrac prefixed to his French translation of Pufendorf's *de jure naturae et gentium*, from which we quoted already in §. 10, a lengthy dissertation under the title of „une Préface qui sert d'introduction à tout l'Ouvrage“, in which same Préface there occur sundry passages which are anything but flattering or favorable to the ethical insights of the Churchfathers in general. Examples. „En voilà, je pense, plus qu'il ne faut, pour faire voir clairement que les plus célèbres Docteurs de l'Eglise des six premiers Siècles sont de mauvais Maîtres et de pauvres Guides en matière de Morale.“ — „Mortifiés de voir, que, sans être obligés de chercher long-temps et de se donner beaucoup de peine, plusieurs Auteurs ont apporté un bon nombre d'exemples de faux raisonnemens et d'erreurs grossières qui se trouvent dans les Ouvrages des Pères.“ — These (they are to be found on pp. 30, 31 in the sixth edit. of 1750; the work was first published already anno 1706, if I mistake not) and other similar uncomplimentary observations on Barbeyrac's part incited or provoked M. Ceillier to write the afore-mentioned bulky apologetic work which, in its turn, called forth from Barbeyrac also a belligerent treatise,¹⁾ and in the latter also the point now under mention is minutely discussed. Here the paper-war between these two gentlemen ended, for aught I know to the contrary;²⁾ and the general opinion on its merits would appear to be that Barbeyrac often condemns the churchfathers too rashly and sweep-

¹⁾ Viz. the in §. 66 quoted *Traité*, 1728, where vide pp. 242—247, ch. XV, §§. 7—11, and cf. also *Préface*, p. XXXV. ²⁾ At least, Ceillier does not recur to this topic in T. X of his subsequent 23 quartos of „*histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*.“

ingly, and that Ceillier as often defends them uncandidly and unskilfully.¹⁾ — Having penned these few lines on the origin of the misinterpretation at issue, we will now undertake to discuss it upon philological and contextual grounds.

Ceillier quotes in support of his interpretation of „absque eo“ the use of absque (eo) in the Vulgate of Hieronymus himself, e. g. IV, 1 and 3, VI, 7 of the Song of Solomon (where it, doubtless, does occur in the meaning of *outré*, Germanice *abgesehen davon, daß, geschweige denn*). Barbeyrac, too, confidently refers us to the same linguistic authority, e. g. Is. XLV, 14 and XLIII, 11 (where it, unquestionably, signifies *excepté, hormis*), he at the same asserting that, when connected with a negation, as e. g. in h. l. with *non licet*, it is invariably *exclusive*, (even) in later Latinity of which alone the mention is, or *can be*, here, and referring us to the needful learned authorities.²⁾ For my own humble part, I cannot but think that the mere absque eo does not render Ceillier's interpretation absolutely impossible in a purely *philological* point of view; for, whether I affirm or negative a quality or duty, I may do so without reference (absque; the eo is, of course, only a pronominal expletive, and the que itself was, I presume, originally = *quo*, as e. g. in *itaque*, &c.) to some other possible or real circumstance, and may mean to designate the latter as self-understood either affirmatively or negatively, e. g. her face is handsome, *away from* her mouth, i. e. either: her mouth is, of course, handsome, or: is, of course, not so; she is not handsome, *away from* her mouth, i. e. either: her mouth is, of course, handsome, or: is, of course, the contrary. We would, therefore, prefer arguing more especially from the *context*; and this not only manifestly pronounces Ceillier's interpretation extremely inappropriate, constrained, and artificial, but supplies every probability that Hieronymus entertained the opinion which Barbeyrac ascribed to him. 1. Hieronymus, as we have already hinted, and shall have occasion to prove by and by, set, like, indeed, by far the most of the Fathers, an extremely high value upon virginity, chastity as the perfectionation and crowning-point of all other christian virtues and good works. If, however, Ceillier were in the right, our churchfather would say that it was *self-understood*

¹⁾ Vide e. g. the Biographie universelle s. vv. Barbeyrac and Ceillier.

²⁾ E. g. Vorstius de latinitate merito suspecta, c. 9, and Godefroi sur le code Theodosien, lib. VI, tit. 4, lex 18, p. 56 in T. II. But I have not consulted them.

that suicide was not permissible for the purpose of anticipating violation; but, inasmuch as in his own estimation, as in that of almost every one of those churchfathers who had preceded him or were cotemporary with him, violation was manifestly one of the *worst possible* dangers or sufferings to which persecution could give birth, *he* cannot have meant to say so, without making a conclusio ad absurdum, whatever *we* may choose to think of the matter. 2. Since all the churchfathers who had touched upon this topic before him, and, indeed, if we except Augustinus, all those who flourished in the same age, declare suicide in the case at issue not only permissible, but likewise even glorious and hallowing, is there not sufficient presumptive a priori evidence that he viewed this, if questionable, yet scarcely at that time questioned, matter in the very same light as they? 3. Thence, every other Catholic (not to speak of Protestants) writer, though not agreeing with Hieronymus' opinion, has, nevertheless, expounded it as we have done. As an eminent instance I will select John of Salisbury (Joannes Saresberiensis) who, when treating of the subject of suicide in two consecutive chapters of his chief work,¹⁾ says, although shily, after having previously spoken of the case of Lucretia, what I will now transcribe: „Ego evenire posse non arbitror, ut cujuscunque difficultatis articulo, liceat propria auctoritate homini, sibi mortem inferre, nec etiam ubi castitas periclitatur. *Licet hunc casum videatur excipere doctor ille doctorum, cui in sacrario literarum vix aliquem ardeo comparare.* Haec mors omnino desperatorum est, et eorum, qui licet corpore vivant, jam mentis morte praemortui, animo vivere desierunt. Utique non vivorum, sed jam mortuorum mors est.“

But, to come to a conclusion, Ceillier would not have really gained anything, if he had won the victory in this debate, and Barbeyrac might have given up this passage to him without being in any real danger of losing his own cause; for, as the reader may learn from a note in the very edition of Jerome's works which I have previously quoted, elsewhere a passage is to be found in this same churchfather's works which, without being either grammatically, lexicographically or otherwise in the least doubtful or debatable, demonstrates with unmistakeable clearness and incontrovert-

¹⁾ Polieraticus, lib. II, c. 26 and c. 27. Opera omnia, edid. Giles, vol. III, p. 149.

ible certainty that he was an advocate and a laudator of suicide, if resorted to as an asylum from violation. In the above mentioned treatise against Jovinian, namely, whilst adducing examples and illustrations of the reverence in which virginity and chastity were held by the Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians, our churchfather gives very many instances of Pagan virgins and matrens who had slain themselves, either because they had suffered violence, or because they feared having to suffer it. And, among such instances, which occupy five entire chapters (41—46 incl.), Hieronymus includes with a pre-eminent measure of admiration the case of seven Milesian virgins who, during the devastations of the Gauls, escaped from dishonor by a self-inflicted death.¹⁾ *Quis valeat silentio praeterire septem Milesias virgines, quae Gallorum impetu cuncta vastante, ne quid indecens ab hostibus sustinerent, turpitudinem morte fugerunt: exemplum sui cunctis virginibus relinquentes, honestis mentibus magis pudicitiam curae esse, quam vitam.* — An historical authority for this incident I have in vain tried to lay my hands upon at this moment; and I must, therefore, rest satisfied with quoting that Greek epigram in Grotius' Latinization which I referred to, when speaking of Eusebius.

„Ah morimur, morimur, Milete, nec impia probra
Gallorum volumus, patria cara, pati.
Injicit hunc nobis ardorem barbaricus Mars,
Virginibus ternis, civibus, alma, tuis.
Non expectamus thalamum, prolemque nefandam,
Assertor casti corporis Orcus erit.“

Finally, however, in another work of his²⁾ Hieronymus becomes, somewhat in the style of Lactantius, controversial, as it were, against classical Paganism in his denunciation of suicide. Whilst, however, as we saw, the latter churchfather assigned, at least, two reasons for the condemnation of self-destruction, viz. that man did not step into life by his own power, and, therefore, may not step out of it of his own accord, and that, because suicide is murder, God, inasmuch as he will punish all murder, will as a matter of course punish suicide, our churchfather contents himself with what we may call, at the utmost, the *implication* of the former ar-

¹⁾ Lib. I, cap. 41, pp. 206, 309 of T. IV. ²⁾ Ep. XXXIX ad Paulam super obitu Blaesillae filiae, Opera, T. I, p. 178.

gument. A high-born Roman matron, Paula by name, who was a pupil and friend of Hieronymus', and during her widowhood gave herself up to the most boundless asceticism in the Holy Land, had lost her eldest daughter, Blesilla by name, who having become a widow seven months after her marriage, when only twenty years of age, also devoted herself to conventual life, and soon died, on which occasion the above letter was penned, in which the Saviour (Salvator) is represented as speaking to the disconsolate mother. „Art thou angry, then, that thy daughter has become mine? Art thou indignant at my judgment, and grudgest by rebellious tears my possession? For, thou knowest what I think of thee, and of these others belonging to thee. Thou deniest thyself food, but not for the sake of fasting, but from grief. I love not suchlike abstinence. Such fasts are my adversaries. *Nullam animam recipio, quae me nolente, separatur a corpore. Tales stulta Philosophia habeat martyres, habeat Zenonem, Cleombrotum, vel Catonem. Super nullum requiescit spiritus meus, nisi*“ (he here quotes the last words of Is. LXVI, 2).

IX. Augustinus († 430).

I have purposely left this in every respect most remarkable and most influential churchfather to form the conclusion of the present §; for, despite his strange and gloomy predestination-theory, which in abstracto would seem to render a priori all morality, inasmuch as the latter is necessarily based upon free will, almost impossible, he has discussed our very topic more circumstantially and all-sidedly, more profoundly and systematically, with more varied scholarlike erudition as well as more genuine practical wisdom than any one of his fellow-laborers during the first six centuries, nay, than all of them put together. Indeed, I scarcely know where to begin, or where to end, when I stand before the huge tomes of his numerous works, and look around for the testimonies therein contained on the subject of self-slaughter, and every other kindred question, e. g. martyrdom, flight, apostasy, self-denunciation and self-extradition, virginity and chastity, the sainthood and canonization of suicides. However, since I have in the course of this Treatise pretty frequently already referred to, and quoted from, the one or the other of his Epistles and Tracts, I may consider myself permitted to open at once that master-work of his, several consecutive chapters of which, they being exclusively devoted to the theme of our enquiry, exhibit his views and sentiments in the most complete and connected man-

ner.¹⁾ But, unless I were to transcribe all those chapters from word to word, we cannot follow him step by step on the track of his investigation and argumentation; we must, therefore, be content to place before ourselves, and this we shall do almost solely in his own words, clearly and briefly the main points in his assertions, or, perhaps, I ought rather to say, the chief ethical results at which he arrives.

His general position may be stated thus: suicide *in and by itself* is never permitted, is always a crime, is not a proof of magnanimity, but the effect of weakness, and must, therefore, be neither lauded nor excused, but rather, on the contrary, abhorred and condemned, no matter what particular motive may have evoked it. „Neque enim frustra in sanctis canonicis libris nusquam nobis divinitus praeceptum permissumque referri potest, ut vel ipsius adipiscendae immortalitatis, vel ullius carenti cavendive mali causâ, nobismetipsis necem inferamus“ (c. 20 in init.). „Hoc dicimus, hoc asserimus, hoc modis omnibus approbamus, neminem spontaneam mortem sibi inferre debere, velut fugiendo molestias temporales, ne incidat in perpetuas: neminem propter aliena peccata, ne hoc ipse incipiat habere gravissimum proprium, quem non polluebat alienum: neminem propter sua peccata praeterita, propter quae magis hac vita opus est, ut possint poenitendo sanari: neminem velut desiderio vitae melioris, quae post mortem speratur; quia reos suae mortis melior post mortem vita non suscipit (c. 26 in fin.).

Nevertheless, there are, according to him, cases of suicide which may or haply must be viewed *indulgently* and *pardoningly*, though even they dare not be looked upon and put forward as themes for eulogy and imitation. Alluding, namely, to those very instances which e. g. Hieronymus makes exceptions of, Augustinus argues to about the following effect. Since it is not permitted to kill a *guilty* person by private violence — the opposite, of course, to the judicial power of the governmental executive —, it is so much the less permitted to kill one's self, especially if one be *innocent*, and „cum pudicitia virtus sit *animi*“ (c. 18), those same christian virgins and matrons were demonstrably in *error*. „Verumtamen si detestabile facinus et damnable scelus est, etiam se ipsum hominem occidere, sicut veritas manifesta proclamat; quis ita decipiat, ut dicat, Jam

¹⁾ De civitate Dei, lib. I, c. 16 until c. 27 incl.

nunc peccemus, ne postea forte peccemus; jam nunc perpetremus homicidium, ne forte incidamus in adulterium" (c. 25 m.). „Quamobrem non habet quod in se morte spontanea puniat femina, sine ulla sua consensione violenter oppressa, et alieno compressa peccato: quanto minus ante quam hoc fiat? ne admittatur homicidium certum, cum ipsum flagitium, quamvis alienum, adhuc pendet incertum" (c. 18 f.). „Habent quippe intus gloriam castitatis, testimonium conscientiae: habent autem coram oculis Dei sui; nec requirunt amplius, ubi quid recte faceant, non amplius habent, ne deviant ab auctoritate legis divinae, cum male devitant offensionem suspicionis humanae" (c. 19 f.). — I may here as well annotate that the very circumstance that, when Alarich took the city of Rome, several christian women, among whom there were some nuns, had been violated, out of which occurrence the Pagans had fabricated one of their reproaches against the Christians, led Augustinus to discuss the theme of suicide thus elaborately in the first of those XXII books upon the composition of which he, according to his own confession, employed more than a dozen years, in defence of Christianity against Paganism. — But to resume our thread, our churchfather would fain, nevertheless, as before said, look upon the particular case of those suicidal females who are under his specific consideration, with compassionate indulgence, with kindly forgiveness, and thinks that the „humanus affectus" cannot fail to induce everybody to feel towards them as he himself feels. „Ac per hoc et quae se occiderunt, ne quidquam huiusmodi paterentur, quis humanus affectus eis nolit ignosci?" (c. 17 init.). Whilst thus merely soliciting forgiveness and craving compassion for them, he cannot, of course, be supposed to give vent to any enthusiastic admiration, but rather, as we ourselves should say, designedly banishes and destroys all *false* moral illusion and halo, proclaiming indeed their action an error, a violation of the severe command of duty, a transgression of the ordinarily and universally valid moral law, and decidedly inferring that it would be „crimen insipientiae" to blame such christian women as would not, and did not, kill themselves „ne suo facinore alienum flagitium devitarent" (c. 17).

Moreover, a careful perusal of the pertinent portions of the chapters in question must, I think, lead most persons to the belief that this — more especially, *if we consider the spirit of that age in which he lived and for which he wrote* — most acute and judicious reasoner, as far as our subject is concerned, would have

treated the self-inflicted deaths of those same christian females with even smaller favor, fewer apologies, and a minor display of at best somewhat skeptical and undecided parallels of reasons and counter-reasons, if a peculiar fact had not been present to his mind and obtruded itself upon his notice, nay, we might aver, biassed and swayed his better judgment: *the Church*, as we have in this § hinted, had *canonized* some of them! —

In §. 50 already, we saw that our churchfather exculpated and vindicated Samson's suicide only on the supposition of a *special divine authority* for it — who does not feel disposed here to think of the old saying „who excuses, accuses“? —; and now we learn that his tenderness and deference towards the Church induced him to suppose that she, the Church, had received, as it were, in some manner *sufficient testimony* to the effect that the Divine Will enjoined or permitted her to honor and saint the said Virgins and Matrons, as though *they* too had acted suicidally with divine approbation, not to say, under divine inspiration. „Sed quaedam, inquit, sanctae feminae, tempore persecutionis, ut insectatores suae pudicitiae devitarent, in rupturum atque necaturum se fluvium projecerunt; eoque modo defunctae sunt, earumque martyria in catholica Ecclesia veneratione celeberrima frequentantur. De his nihil temere audeo judicare. Utrum enim Ecclesiae aliquibus fide dignis testificationibus, ut earum memoriam sic honoret, divina persuaserit auctoritas, nescio: et fieri potest, ut ita sit. Quid si enim hoc fecerunt, non humanitus deceptae, sed divinitus jussae; nec errantes, sed obediētes?“ (c. 26 init.). But, the *heart* of our churchfather was, methinks, in this particular better than his *head*. Cautious though he be, he was still not sufficiently so. „Qui ergo audit, non licere se occidere, faciāt, si jussit, cujus non licet Jussa contemnere. Tantummodo videat, utrum divina jussio nullo nudet incerto“ (c. 26). He ought, as I take it, to have stuck to his „humanus affectus“, letting the matter rest with indulgence and charity, nay, if you like, with sympathy and admiration, but at all events leaving alone the purely supposititious items of particular inspiration and the authority of the Church, and the more so, since those same slayers of themselves did not themselves believe, or, at least, did not profess, that they had been favored with any especial inspiration and warranty. — But, whenever Reason allows herself to be led captive under the dominion of Authority, we see something resembling the present dilemma of Au-

gustinus, a predicament not unlike that in which, some centuries later, poor Galilei found himself with his astronomy: doubting, and yielding, yet leaving us under the impression that, despite the outward yielding, the inward doubt remained to the last. — If, however, Cardinal Bannionius took upon himself to affirm, as I have read, that the extravagances of the Circumcelliones were Augustine's sole reason for disapproving of the voluntary deaths of the martyrs now under debate, I cannot, for my own part, but consider the said assertion shallow, impudent, unsupported. It might almost remind us of what sundry catholic historians have sillily and spitefully suggested to the effect that a thousand years later a certain well-known Augustine monk commenced his momentous reformatorial agitation from jealousy, envy, and anger against the rival Dominicans. Not that these two things are by any means analogous; but both of them serve to illustrate one point of some importance in all controversies, viz. that pettifogging or disingenuous people, howsoever learned they may be, ever seek small causes for even great effects, and shrewdly guess and cunningly insinuate until they have reduced what they disapprove of to something weak and petty; for, then to argue it down is all the easier thing, the easier to be sure, but also the more unmanly, dishonest, inglorious.

NB. On Origenes vide §. 32, and on Gregory of Nazianz vide the following §.

§. 71. THE VERDICT OF THE CHURCH.

We will, however, now devote a brief § to the tenets and practices of „the Church“ in the particular specified by Augustinus.

In the first century of our era already, Greeks, Italians, Africans, Jews and Gentiles were among the number of those who received and embraced Christianity, and the differences of nationality, temperament, culture, habitude were likely to engender anything but either identity in conduct or uniformity in opinion among the converts. Thence, more or less significant divergences, both dogmatical and ethical, began to reveal and establish themselves already at a very early period, multifarious parties or sects arising and vanishing, and re-arising with slight variations, almost as regularly as ebb and flood. The originators and leaders of such parties or sects were oftentimes wise and erudite men who on their own responsibility speculated and

prescribed concerning what they individually took to be the special characteristics and vital elements of christianity; sometimes, however, they were not exactly fools, but yet fanatics and bigots, and they too invariably found a smallish or largish number of followers who turned their theorems and precepts to almost every imaginable use and — abuse. Opposite to such so-called Schismatics or Heretics, however, a certain body claimed to be *the Church*. No matter, now, whether denominated Kirk, Kirche, Church from *κρηνα* or from circus, this same body professed to possess and to represent *the truth*. Yet, unless I sadly err, it could at the utmost only be said to have on its side that system of insights, principles and practices which had gradually acquired the ascendancy, speaking numerically, after Christianity had succeeded in becoming the ruling religion in the Roman State: which numerical ascendancy, moreover, was often rather apparent than actual, since there were doubtless always many *silent dissentients*. Consequently, what constituted the Church in e. g. the time of Augustinus was, I presume, merely the more powerful and numerous concrete unity, irrespectively of its being abstractly, principally, ideally in the right or in the wrong. Such a thing as a *catholic*, i. e. a universal, church never existed; the very term is a historic misnomer, unless we should incline to define it *figuratively* in such wise as to let it apply to Christianity in general as opposed to the so-called Jewish dispensation which was something *nationally* and notionally, locally and temporarily limited. Inasmuch, moreover, as only the quality, but never the mere quantity, of men can bear valid and decisive testimony on any question concerning either dogmatics or ethics, we need not by any means assume that the „*vox populi*“ of those early times was always exactly the „*vox Dei*“; it may, on the contrary, have been in part the voice only of passion, prejudice, ignorance, folly. Nay, indeed, we individually do *believe* that from the very commencement, as it is proveably the case in the present day, more of truth and virtue occasionally, or even often, abode with the minority rather than with the majority, i. e. with the Sects than with the Church. And, methinks, if we do not allow ourselves to be mystified and misled by pretty, sentimental, edifying Novels about the primitive ages of Christianity, but prefer looking soberly and critically at such naked facts of the case as the original sources present, no other conclusion can be arrived at. Therefore, *inter alia*, the *correctness* of the position of the early Church to

the topic of our present enquiry must be deemed a perfectly *open question*.

Since, as we saw in the preceding §, Eusebius and Ambrosius were the first churchfathers who spoke of the suicide of christian females for the purpose under mention, we have, as far as I have been able to learn, no authority for assuming that it occurred at all before the time to which their narratives refer, since otherwise the earlier churchfathers, when speaking of and against suicide, would in *all probability* have alluded to so peculiar a phenomenon; nor have we any reason for supposing that e. g. Justin would *not* have *excluded* this case from the condemnation which he pronounces on suicide in general, or Origenes, whose general anti-suicidal views I stated already in §. 32, or, also Gregorius Nazianzenus, whose anti-suicidal dictum is equally sweeping, and still more briefly expressed. Speaking of angelic abstinence or askesis among the Christians, he adds: ¹⁾

Καὶ τοῦτ' ἄκοντες δόγματος θείου χάριν·
Δεῖ γὰρ δεδῶσθαι, μέχρις ἐκλύσεθ θείας.

If, then, Pelagia who is supposed to have died anno 311 or 312, was among the earliest examples of suicide under the circumstances now under mention, we may, perhaps, assume that under the earlier Pagan Emperors both the Caesars themselves and their ministering Satellites had been content with robbing christian females of their liberty, their property, their life, and not yet bethought themselves of that extra-piece of unmanly cruelty and diabolical refinement which evoked self-sought death as the only remaining means of rescue from externally polluting violence. But, be this as it may, both she, Pelagia, and Domnina, Prosdoce and Bernice, for instance, had, doubtless, been *canonized* prior to the time of Chrysostomos and Augustinus, if not indeed prior to that of Ambrosius. What, however, does „canonization“ exactly mean?

Ere — I abstract the following few items from a very detailed article penned by a living Catholic divine ²⁾ — a person is properly canonized, he is, if not constantly, yet usually, *beatified*, i. e. pronounced „beatus“ or blessed, which thing meaneth about this: according to episcopal or ecclesiastical — hodie Papal — authority, a person may or shall be considered in a state of beatitude, and be

¹⁾ Carmen X. de Virtute, lines 627, 628, T. II, p. 447 in Caillau's edit. of his opera omnia, Paris, 1842. ²⁾ Kirchen-Lexicon der katholischen Theologie von Weyer und Welte, 1847 ff., in vv. Beatification und Canonisation.

publicly invoked and rendered an object of special worship both on account of his *heroic* virtues (i. e. such virtues as, surpassing the demands of nature, reach the highest degree of perfection and raise those who are therewith adorned far above other just persons who with slower steps strive towards christian perfection) and of the *miracles* wrought by him (i. e. such actions as are either „*supra naturam*“, or „*contra naturam*“, or even only „*praeter naturam*“). To be *canonized*, on the contrary, signifieth that a person is definitively and solemnly pronounced to be placed in the „*canon*“ of the „*sancti*“, and is as such to be worshipped by the *entire church* through the medium of various kinds of festive and holy rites which I need here as little stop to enumerate as I need follow my reverend and learned guide into his particulars concerning the would-be scrupulously circumstantial, but in verity very theatrical and even farcical, procedure attendant upon, and connected with, the process, as of beatification so of canonization. — More important and interesting for our present purpose is the question: whence this entire phenomenon in the early christian church already? Our mode of answering which will compel us to dispense with Dr. von Moys' guidance, since our own ultra-Protestant view cannot but, as a matter of course, diverge altogether from his.

In the mythic ages of Greece and Rome it had, as everybody knows, been the custom to *heroize* mortals who had, as benefactors of their respective countries' cause, struggled unto the death, whether they had conquered or had succumbed. Classical paganism, moreover, was wont, in the earliest centuries of christianity, to *apotheosize* the deceased occupants of the imperial throne; not because aught resembling personal holiness had distinguished them, but simply because their position had rendered them mighty and marked above ordinary mortals. Suchlike herofication and partial deification — and, by the by, many of those mythic personages and impurpled rulers had perished by their own hands — were the Gentile mode, as it were, of beatification and canonization. In the primitive ages of the church, however, christian heroism assumed more specifically the form of suffering, of living in self-denial and dying for one's faith, and during that same period Christian imperial dignity and sway, if I may use these terms, consisted chiefly in spiritual teachership and episcopal guidance. Thence, if Paganic prejudices and habitudes of the sort under mention should attempt to assume christian shape and put on

christian garb, the objects selected for beatification and canonization would naturally be chiefly Martyrs and Fathers. And so it was. Namely, just as sundry christian festivals were manifestly introduced in imitation of or accommodation to already existent Heathen ones, so, if I do not err, the origin of the idea and practice of Saintship in the catholic church must be referred to *Paganic Idolatry*, no matter, whether the earliest christians themselves were or were not conscious of this adaptation of theirs. At all events, the N. T. application of the term „saint“ (ἅγιος) cannot be said to have supplied any warranty for the said idea or practice, inasmuch as that term is there used only in the signification of chosen, separate, called and set aside for hallowed ends and hallowing efficacy, thus answering to the Hebrew קדש, and is, consequently, applied to all *true christians* quite generally, because they were presumed to cling as such with faith, love, and hope to the spiritual things of Christ, to feel themselves as mere strangers on a corrupt earth, and to endeavor to live, not out of, but yet above, the world. And, let us bear in mind that in the N. T. such „saints“, aye, even the greatest among those who, imitating the mind and life of Jesus, continually strive after divine perfection, are in the same breath declared to be, nevertheless, merely poor sinners and useless servants, and themselves willingly comprehend themselves under these apparently humiliating designations. Indeed, in the N. T. age itself the christian congregations and their teachers evidently accepted and defined the term at issue as simply = ἐκλεκτός, and were perfectly content with understanding it under the aforesaid restrictions. By and by, however, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles not only, but martyrs — thus, for instance, already in the Pastor of Hermas, a book which several of the early churchfathers, e. g. Origenes, occasionally quote as *canonical* —, hermits, monks came in for a rank par excellence among the ἅγιοι, as persons to whom some *extraordinary* measure of virtue and merit, i. e. holiness, was ascribed by — the Church, which same church, the longer the more, so entirely lost sight of, modified, corrupted the primary meaning of the word ἅγιος that we find it henceforward applied in a pre-eminent and an exclusive manner to — what sets and sorts of mortals not?

This is one point. Another is as follows. At a very early period already, Pagan superstitions began to attach themselves to the reverence which was paid to the memories, and to the faith

which was reposed in the intercessions made in Heaven, and in the miracles wrought on earth, by such departed christians as had been beatified and canonized by ecclesiastical authority. Thus, for instance, we learn from Theodoret and Asterius (as quoted by Neander on pp. 128, 129 of *B. II.* in his already mentioned life of Chrysostomos) that martyrs were considered as protectors of cities (πολιουχοι), received votive tablets (ἀναθηματα) as divine men (θειοι ἄνθρωποι), and that a certain Phokas of Sinope was viewed and treated as the patron of mariners, much in the style of the then already deposed Castor and Pollux!

Why, then, should we be at all surprised under these circumstances, if some few martyr-suicides, despite their suicide, or, if you like, just because of it, i. e. of the high appreciation of virginity and chastity they thereby evidenced, were in the early church *sainted*? — Nevertheless, certain *modern* catholic writers, following in the footsteps of Chrysostomos and Augustinus, would fain make some sort of *apologetic* limitation for the said phenomenon. Before, however, we introduce the dicta of some of the said writers, we will endeavor to learn what the *mediaeval* catholic church *legally* fixed on the matter, and here we shall find her, as on many other points, *apparently* at least at issue with herself.

About the middle of the 12th century, Gratian, an Italian monk, collected the ecclesiastical laws, i. e. the council decrees and *papal* decrees of earlier centuries, not, however, only collecting, but also selecting, arranging, comparing, and illustrating, them. Thus originated his „concordantia discordantium canonum“ or the „Decretum Gratiani“, which has received a *permanent* place in, and indeed forms the main part of, the corpus juris canonici as a sort of system of (catholic) ecclesiastical law. Herein, now, we are treated to numerous detached passages from the writings of Augustinus, more especially his *de civitate Dei*, and also to the synodal decree of Braga touching the exclusion of suicides from the otherwise usual funeral solemnities (on which matter vide, however, the next Chapter). But, inasmuch as Gratian likewise receives ¹⁾ that passage of Hieronymus' Commentary on Jonas which we have previously commented on, and evidently understood the „absque eo“ etc. therein as we

¹⁾ Decretum Gratiani, secunda pars, causa XXIII, quaestio V. Canones 9 and 10 are extracts from Augustinus; can. 12 contains the synodal decree of Braga.

have done, we cannot but conclude that he was in a manner less severe than Augustinus, rather fully agreeing with Hieronymus that suicide was to be viewed and treated as morally and ecclesiastically permitted, if chastity should be in danger.

But, a passage in a somewhat *later* integral portion of the *corpus juris canonici*¹⁾ most certainly seems to embody a different opinion. I allude to a decision given by Pope Innocent XI anno 1190 in reply to an enquiry made by the Archbishop of Tours.²⁾ There is first a statement of the case, the substance of which is that a certain French nobleman endeavored to entrap and lead astray a certain maiden who, his violence at last overstepping all bounds, fled from the grasp of her pursuers, and in doing so fell from a bridge, and was drowned („in amnem de ponte cadens fuit casu submersa“). His Holiness then decrees. Quocirca mandamus, quatenus, cum illa *non sponte* praecipitaverit se de ponte, sed, sicut superius est expressum, *casu* ceciderit, corpus ejus tradi facias ecclesiasticae sepulturae: praesertim quum *ex honesta causa* fugisse noscatur, et cui communicabatur viventi communicandum sit jam defunctae.“ Thus, consequently, we have anything but canonization of suicide from the motive under consideration; nay, on the contrary, we are led to assume that, if the said nameless female could have been proved or presumed to have voluntarily precipitated herself into the river, instead of having fallen thereinto accidentally, she would have, *like a criminal suicide*, i. e. an excommunicate, unabsolved member, been deprived of „ecclesiastical sepulture“!! — At least, I cannot discern what other conclusion the wording of this papal rescript would justify any candid person in arriving at.

We now proceed, according to promise, to introduce the opinions of some few later, comparatively modern, catholic writers. Tillemont,³⁾ when speaking of Pelagia, Domnina, etc., says: „Ces morts tragiques qui ne se peuvent justifier que sur les inspirations extraordinaires du S. Esprit“; and, when speaking of the case of Sophronia at Rome, which we related from Eusebius on p. 93 of §. 69, he says: „mais

¹⁾ The *Decretum Gratiani* as the earliest part of the *corpus juris canonici* reaches up to Alexander III, i. e. 1151. ²⁾ *Decret. Greg. IX. lib. III. tit. 28. de sepulturis. cap. 11.* The five books of the *Decretalia Gregorii Noni*, which constitute the second part of the *corp. jur. canon.*, reach up to the year 1230. ³⁾ *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclesiastique des six premières siècles*, 1698, T. V, pp. 400, 404.

comme on ne voit pas que l'Eglise Romaine l'ait jamais honorée, nous n'avons pas le mesme droit de justifier son action." Still more explicit is the author of the above quoted vies des Saintes, from which work I will, therefore, quote two pertinent passages in their original form. „L'exemple en auroit été d'une très-dangereuse consequence, si l'Eglise eût voulu l'approuver: mais pour faire voir qu'elle n'auroit garde de le proposer à ses enfans, elle n'a jugé à propos de consacrer la mémoire, que de celles en qui auroit paru le mouvement du saint-Esprit, d'une manière plus visible, et que Dieu auroit poussées par quelque commandement intérieur, semblable à celui par lequel il avoit voulu éprouver la fidélité et l'obéissance d'Abraham, sur la vie de son fils" (ubi supra). And, when speaking of saints Domnina, Bernice and Prosdoci.¹⁾ „Elles n'avoient sans doute consulté pour une telle résolution ni les loix de l'Eglise, ni celles de la nature, qui sont les unes et les autres dans l'ordre de Dieu. Aussi n'a-t-on entrepris de justifier une action si peu régulière, dans nos trois saintes, comme dans sainte Pelagie et dans d'autres, qui se sont procuré la mort d'elles mêmes, que sur la persuasion où l'on est que le Saint Esprit, qui souffle où il plaît, inspire aussi comme il veut; et qu'il a bien des mouvemens et des routes qui nous sont inconnus." Also the celebrated M. de Valois expresses himself to the same effect.²⁾ „Recte quidem observavit³⁾ αὐτοχειρίαν ab Ecclesia non probari; cum homines mortis metu, aut per desperationem manus sibi violentas afferunt. Sed quoties divini Spiritus instinctu ad id impelluntur, quod rarissime accidit: tunc id facinus approbat quidem ac miratur Ecclesia, quippe quae divino Spiritu semper regitur et afflatur: non tamen imitandum proponit." Ambrosius, however, and Chrysostomos, both of them not only Churchfathers, but also Saints of the Church, evidently did the latter, whatever Valesius may say.

I need not reiterate what I have already more than once hinted at: that excuses of this kind appear to me worse than useless. It is at all times far wiser to account *humanly* for what was at the worst

¹⁾ T. VII, p. 69 s. d. Oct. 4. ²⁾ In his notes on Eusebius, ad lib. VIII, c. 14, p. 170 in the Paris edit. of 1659. ³⁾ i. e. some Greek Scholiast whose scholion he gives, both in the original and in a Latin version, from some very old codex of Eusebius. But, surely, Valesius evades or ignores the real import of the said scholium, for in it astonishment at and dissent from Eusebius' judgment are expressed, and the assertion is made unconditionally that the church does not place suicides of any description among her martyrs.

simply a human *error*, instead of burdening, without the slightest authority of any kind, upon the Divine Spirit what it, if it itself were to plead its own cause, would in all probability not acknowledge as being of its own. Nevertheless, a verdict on suchlike cases of suicide must, I think, always appear a no less difficult than delicate matter from an unfettered and unbiassed *Protestant* standing-point. A dialectical discussion of principles to and fro cannot avail much here; for, we are placed rather upon the terrain of feeling than on that of reasoning. As a pure and strong will would prove superior to everything that could render the mere yielding to brute force in such situations really sinful, so a clear and correct intellect would waive every scruple about becoming the cause of another's criminality, since, partly, that criminality exists already in the other's purpose, and, partly, the doer alone, not the sufferer, has to look to his own responsibility for his own actions. If, however, a christian female harbor the conviction and cherish the feeling that, were she to live through what she can escape from by death only, her innocence would have participated in guilt — I designedly thus lay in these last words themselves a very self-contradiction —: what manliest man, what womanliest woman would like to say *categorically* unto her: thou must, for *duty's* sake, live until the dreaded thing shall have come to pass? Call, if you choose, her conviction an error, her feeling a delusion, her suicidal act moral or religious enthusiasm; yet, unless I err much, that conviction is and remains worthy of esteem, that feeling is and remains worthy of love, that suicidal act is and remains worthy of admiration! —

However, not to leave any palpable gap in our historical survey, I will add as literary appendices two or three verdicts of *Protestant* moralists. Barbeyrac (*ubi supra*). „Cette violation, courageuse en elle-même, ne laisse pas d'être, en bonne Morale, une vraie foiblesse, pour laquelle seulement l'état et les circonstances des personnes qui y succombent, donnent lieu d'espérer la Miséricorde d'un Dieu, qui n'aime point la mort du Pécheur.“ Not only too harsh, as it seems to me, but also too sentimentally formal. De Wette.¹⁾ „Ist nun die Ehre, die sittliche Würde der Person, unstreitig mehr werth als das Leben: so thaten diese, scheint es, Recht, indem sie dieselbe dem Leben vorzogen. Aber eine gewaltsame Entehrung trifft nicht die sittliche Würde

¹⁾ *Christliche Sittenlehre*, Th. III, 1823, pp. 297, 298.

selbst, sondern bloß den Leib, weil der Wille nicht eingewilligt hat: mithin kann man sich wohl im Gefühl der Unschuld darüber erheben. Eine solche Strenge der Keuschheit, welche sogar den Leib unbefleckt erhalten wissen will, ist sehr achtungswerth, verträgt sich aber doch nicht mit der freien, sittlichen Ansicht, welche den Geist über den Körper setzt, und ist immer ein Vorurtheil, das den Schritt, das Leben für die verlorne äußere Keuschheit wegzuwurfen, nicht rechtfertigt, und nicht zur Regel dienen kann Hätten sie (those christian women) ihr geistiges Leben überhaupt und ihren persönlichen Werth höher geachtet als die Meinung ihrer Mitbürger, und sich über ein erlittenes Schicksal in das Reich der Freiheit erheben können: so würden sie das Leben dem Tode vorgezogen haben. Aber die Christinnen (in opposition to Lucretia whose case he makes parallel to theirs) hätten eine höhere Ansicht der Tugend und eine größere Geistesfreiheit an den Tag legen sollen." — This is in a spirit of far greater discrimination as well as of far juster appreciation; but, if I mistake not, the parallel just alluded to would have been better omitted, since it tends rather to confuse than to illustrate the question under debate; for, the differences are greater than de Wette seems to admit, or, perhaps, was at the moment conscious of. On the one hand, the deed *post factum* and the deed *ante factum* makes some more or less material difference, which, however, everybody may think out for himself. On the other hand, we must, doubtless, hold fast the distinction between ancient Roman domestic and social feeling and early Christian dogmatic and ascetic superstition. And, finally, in spite of the circumstantial narratives of e. g. Livy, Diodorus Siculus, narratives which, by the by, are not quite consonant one with the other, and which are evidently somewhat rhetorically embellished, there remains a certain degree of obscurity and equivocity about the exact deportment and motives of that Roman heroine, whereas the conduct and reason of these Christian martyrs are perfectly clear and simple. — When I was speaking in §. 8 of the death of Charlotte Stieglitz, I applied to it a biblical passage which Crusius had applied to the suicidal matrons and virgins whom we have been speaking of; the reader may recall those manful and gentle, those brief and beautiful words to his recollection; and I for one readily say „yea and amen“ to them.

Therefore, if the Romish ecclesiastical community must needs fill its calendar with Saints for almost every day in the year, and find names sufficient for christening its numerous places of worship

— the having churches dedicated to one's self was one of the privileges acquired by canonization, and, according to Baronius and Alban Butler,¹⁾ a church at Constantinople already in the 5th cent. bore the above mentioned Pelagia's name — we cannot help thinking that, *by way of comparison*, the said suicidal virgins and matrons are very far from being the worst specimens of sainthood which have crept into the hagiologies. By way of comparison, I said, viz. with persons who, possibly, never existed at all, e. g. Job (vide Nork's *Festkalender* s. d. May 9), or, persons who, probably, were never Christians, e. g. Boëthius (cf. Ersch and Gruber's *Encyclopädie* s. v.), or, persons who were proveably the very opposite of Christian, e. g. Olaf (vide Laing's three year's residence in Norway). Nay, in this respect it is even noteworthy that we read on one occasion in the corpus juris canonici words to the following effect: „we have heard that some of you, deceived by diabolic cunning, worship as Saint a man who lost his life in intoxication and drunkenness.“²⁾

§. 72. THE TEACHINGS AND IMPRESSIONS OF THE SCHOLASTIC WRITERS CONCERNING SUICIDE.

What we are now-a-days accustomed to call a System of Moral Philosophy could not justly be expected from the Churchfathers. By dogmatical polemics and ethical criminations they had, not to speak of their controversies with Jews and Heretics, to battle down and endeavor to annihilate the superstitions and vices of Paganism, ere they could think of commencing a scientific structure of Christianity, even had they been the men exactly qualified by temper, taste, culture and training for the right performance of the latter task. Thence, no Churchfather can fairly be said to have furnished a calm,

¹⁾ There seems, namely, to be some doubt, whether the same Pelagia of Antioch, and not Pelagia of Tarsus was meant, vide Bolland, and Tillemont ubi supra, p. 746, note 3. It is not of much importance, since there would seem to be in Sicily a church dedicated to Saint Venus, vide Wiggers, ubi supra, B. II, pag. 25. ²⁾ Quoted on p. VIII of the Preface to Gildemeister and Sybel's *der heilige Rod zu Trier und die zwanzig andern heiligen ungenähten Röde*, 1844. The reference is to c. 1. X. de Reliquiis, 3, 45. However, Dr. von Moys in his above mentioned article on beatification alludes to the identical or, at least, a very similar fact as having occurred in the 12th cent. under Pope Alexander III. in a cloister in the diocese of Lixieux.

searching, all-sided, and permanently valuable and valid special and detailed exposition and development of the *moral* bearings of the New Testament scriptures, albeit much thereto tending may, undoubtedly, be found in the writings of e. g. Ambrosius, Lactantius, Chrysostomos, and Augustinus. — Moreover, every new Religion, as long as it is young and fresh, bears within its own self a vigorous principle of vitality, germinates, buds, blossoms more or less spontaneously, as it were, and gets on, as far as its *practical influences* are concerned, by, we might almost say, a sort of traditional power. After the lapse of some time only, when it has in a great measure ceased to be any longer a living tradition, teachers and guides find necessary to employ a more or less artificial propping-machinery, to analyse minute questions, to arrange special cases, to classify and anatomise, as one does with dried plants. Then, Virtues and Sins are not only named as such in a broad and an emphatic manner, but lists, long and accurate, are made out, and balanced and computed in the scales of a reasoning and scientific process. — Similarly, if an analogy be welcome, it is with every newly converted individual soul: it is swayed by great general principles and insights or half-insights; the pros and cons of minutiae can and must bide their time.

From about the seventh century, now, up to the era of the Reformation, the Spirit had become more and ever more extinct, the Herbaries became duly inspected and carefully studied in the Schools and Cloisters, books were written as big as ample leisure permitted, and as siccid as the subjects themselves had grown. We therein find infinitely much about Nominalism and Realism, Prescience and Predestination, Sins mortal and Sins venial, Opera operata and Saintships, Miracles achieved and Visions vouchsafed: barren disputes of Dialecticians and bootless dreams of Mystics, not very much else, as far as my reading has enabled me to learn. The plain is parched, the atmosphere is sultry, and mankind might well welcome the refreshing breeze which came in the 14th and 15th centuries from ancient Hellas, and which bore on its wings something predictive and productive of a Reformation which broke the rule of what has technically been denominated *Scholasticism*, under whose influence Moral Philosophy had, we may perhaps say, made only some *formal* progress, but had at the same time *spiritually* rather retrograded than otherwise.

A gallant-hearted and stout-minded race, no doubt, we encounter in these same so-called Middle Ages, and much romanticism and chivalrousness of one sort or the other, as everybody knows: horsemen tilting in homage of the fair, and crusading to the Holy Land, and bookmen holding mental tournaments with parchment and pen, and doing ecclesiastic warfare against all independent thought; feudal lords with bonded vassals, and potent priests with submissive penitents, pastimes and penances, formalisms and extravagances, brilliancies and darkenesses in such motley confusion and sharp antitheses that historians are often puzzled for a collective and decisive verdict, some of them deploring that the mediaeval glories and strengths and enthusiasms and worships have passed away, and others — these the wiser ones, as I take it — thanking God that we have got rid of the middle ages and of most (not, however, by any means of all; for much Feudalism remains in our Aristocracies, and much Scholasticism in our Theologies) of what characterized them. The task of modern time is to add freedom of mind to piety of heart, and measure and clearness unto strength.

However, let nobody suppose for a moment that I have perused the entire works of any one schoolman, whether dialectician or mystic; I have rather merely read modern Monographs on, or Biographies of, most of them, which, as far as they concern us, shall be quoted in their proper places; or, I have perused the accounts given of their systems in general Histories of philosophy, opening and consulting the one or the other of their own huge tomes only when aught struck me that seemed to demand reference to the original, if I would see fully into the context and enable myself to judge for myself.

Just as in mediaeval *Art* the dogmatic and mystical elements may be said to have prevailed over the ethical and practical ones, Mary and the Saints over Jesus, the Son of God miraculously conceived, Christ mysteriously expiring, arising, ascending, Christ as the vicarious Bearer of unearthly woes and the Martyr of Martyrs amid unspeakable pangs, over the Son of Man as the Sage, the Teacher, the zealous Actor of Benevolence, the energetic Judge of Right and Wrong, the heroic Vindicator of the Motive and the Inward of morality in contradistinction to forms and formalities: so in mediaeval *Theology* and *Philosophy* far more toil and thought and genius, if this last word be here applicable, would appear to have been ex-

pended on speculative hypotheses and formal argumentations than on a genuinely spiritual conception and a genuinely practical representation of the *duties of man*, i. e. veritable *Ethics*. Reasons for this twofold phenomenon it would not be difficult to assign; but it is time that we should lay hold of the theme which we are pursuing, concerning which I will in limine annotate that it derived neither new light nor new strength from aught I have been able to trace in those few works of the Schoolmen from which, I have every reason for assuming, our chief information must be derived.

I. Bernhard of Clairvaux († 1153).

II. John of Salisbury († 1180)..

What little I know or wish to communicate about their opinions on our topic vide in §. 50, p. 56, and §. 70, p. 125. I may therefore hasten to St. Bernhard's unfortunate and condemned antagonist, and to the most celebrated and authoritative oracle of the mediaeval church. Previously, however, two remarks.

I doubt not for a moment that, were I to apply to the various Monkish or Episcopal commentators on the Scriptures who flourished between the age of Augustinus and that of St. Bernhard, very numerous anti-suicidal testimonies in the shape of notes on sundry passages of the O. or the N. T. would present themselves to us; but such a procedure would lead us too much into useless details. However, here one example by way of illustration.

In the 11th century, a certain Nicetas, the Greek metropolitan of Heraclea in Thrace, gathered from various Greek churchfathers and later Greek ecclesiastical writers notes on the book of Job;¹⁾ and among these same notes those of a certain Olympiodor, who is said to have been a monk and diaconus at Constantinople or Alexandria in the 7th century, occupy a very large space; and several of them revert to our topic in the most emphatic manner. Witness the following few extracts.

On ch. VI, 8, 9 „ac si dixisset, Mors unicum mihi est remedium horum malorum, et requies: Me ipsum quidem ex hac vita educere non possum (αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν ἑμαυτὸν ἐξαγαγεῖν οὐ δύναμαι), Dominum autem imploro“, ut etc.

¹⁾ Catena Graecorum Patrum in Beatum Job collectore Niceta, edid. Junius, 1637. The following passages stand on pp. 171, 437, and the last page but one of the Prooemium. Vide also the quotation given already in §. 10.

On ch. XXIX. „Dogma etiam excellentissimum tradit, non oportere, scilicet, quenquam violentâ morte seipsum e corpore extrudere, propter eum qui corpus animae conjunxit.“

„Falsam autem eorum opinionem fuisse, ex hoc apparet, quod cum mortem sibi consciscere, seque e corporis vinculis eximere licuisset, propter Deum qui animam corpori conjunxit, *facinus hoc* admittere non sustinuit: mortis quidem desiderio tenebatur, purum vero et intemeratum cultum erga Deum custodiens, licet in potestate sua esset, seipsum interimere noluit.“

Nor will I on this occasion hesitate to insert literally what Bourquelot (T. IV, p. 254 of the diss. quoted in §. 18) lays some stress upon as „l'expression de la *pensée ecclesiastique*“ in the middle ages in general, when speaking of the emblematical Cathedral-sculptures, and their significance despite their bizarrerie. „Ordinairement c'est dans des médaillons placés au-dessus les uns des autres, sur les murailles des églises, que les artistes ont placé les symboles des vertus et ceux des vices qui leur sont contraires. La figure d'un homme qui se donne volontairement la mort est mise en opposition avec l'emblème du courage et de l'espérance. Ainsi à Notre-Dame de Paris, à Notre-Dame de Chartres, à Notre-Dame d'Amiens, on remarque un personnage qui se perce d'une épée, et qui tombe à la renverse; et cette image est toujours placée dans la catégorie des vices et des mauvaises passions.“

III. Abélard († 1142).

This famed dialectician in his *Sic et Non*¹⁾ (i. e. pro et contra, a title sufficiently descriptive of its form, and not a little significant of the scholastic method in general) proposes and answers 158 Questions, the 155th of which bears the following superscription. „Quod liceat homini inferre sibi manus aliquibus de causis, et contra.“ He starts, without any preliminary observations whatsoever, by quoting that passage of Hieronymus' commentary on Jonah which we discussed in §. 70, incidentally (and approvingly) tells a story about a certain woman (Apollonia) who had voluntarily leapt out of the hands of her tormentors into the flames of a stake which had been pre-

¹⁾ Ediderunt Henke et Lindenkohl, 1851, pp. 416—420. Cousin's earlier edition differs slightly, and, perhaps, this whole chapter of the said work labors somewhat under textual corruption. — On the general structure and spirit of the *Sic et Non* cf. Stephen's Lectures on the History of France, vol. II, p. 169.

pared for her, then forthwith gives numerous anti-suicidal extracts from Augustinus' *de civitate Dei*, thereupon transcribes, again without either comment or connecting link of any sort, a mightily lengthy portion of Macrobius' reflections on Cicero's *somnium Scipionis* (vide p. 124 of §. 30), and finishes off with a brief sentence — which is almost all that belongs to him himself in the entire discussion or rather mere string of quotations — to this effect: „with the same constancy that end which Nature brings about is not to be feared, and death ought not to be forced to appear contrary to the order of Nature“ (*pari autem constantia [mors] nec veniens per naturam timenda est, nec contra ordinem cogenda naturae*).

Inasmuch, now, as all the citations he makes are against suicide, except, perchance, for the rescue of chastity, we are bound to assume that, as his own „conclusio“ sets forth, Abélard meant to disapprove of suicide, except, haply, for the purpose just alluded to. Scriptural arguments he does not pretend to offer, except, perhaps, at second hand, viz. from Augustinus, whom, however, he does not take even the slightest trouble to reconcile with Hieronymus in regard to the matter of imperilled chastity. Indeed, in the „Prologus“ to the *Sic et Non* he is said (vide Stephen) to insist upon the difficulty of rightly understanding the Fathers in general which he traces to no fewer than eight distinct causes; and I doubt much, whether he really attached any exceeding value to the teachings of Church-fatherism upon the whole. For his own person, he would seem to have greatly preferred resting our present question altogether upon the tenets and dicta of Pagan philosophers, probably believing that the Platonists had demonstrated the unlawfulness of suicide more simply and clearly than either the biblical documents or their patristic expositors. Whether he had perused Plato's own writings, or owed his acquaintance with Plato's views to the media of e. g. Cicero, Augustinus, Macrobius, he would appear¹⁾ to have cherished in general a very great reverence for the Academy, in this matter differing most essentially from the majority of the scholastics, the entire endeavor of whose „great sacerdotal synthesis“ is usually defined as an attempt to demonstrate and explicate the truths of Holy Writ by the aid of Aristotle's logics, ethics, and metaphysics, and

¹⁾ Vide Schlosser's *Abélard und Heloise. Ober Leben und Meinungen eines Schwärmers und eines Philosophen*, 1807, p. 115 ff.

whose almost mad admiration of the Stagirite rendered them unjustly prejudiced against, or utterly neglectful of, the teachings of Plato, so that, as we shall presently see, Thomas Aquinas, though he never even so much as alludes to the arguments of the Platonists in the course of his elaborate anti-suicidal argumentation, therein distinctly refers no fewer than three times to Aristotle as „philosophus“ par excellence. Upon the whole, therefore, we must pronounce Abélard's entire treatment of our question superficial, incoherent, confused, and affirm that it was equally little calculated either to add authority to the interdictions of the Church, or to shed light upon the doubts of the Schools.

IV. Thomas Aquinas († 1274).

The *Summa Theologica* or *Summa Sanctae Theologiae*, the most comprehensive among the larger works of this sainted „Doctor evangelicus“, is divided into three parts, the first of which treats of God, the second of Man, and the third of Christ, and these three together afford something very like the inhold of the collective dogmatics and ethics of the church on the culminating point of scholastic mental life, i. e. in the 13th century. What extensive, profound knowledge and dry, severe reason could do, the book now before us is pretty universally allowed to have done; only the heart and the imagination must not therein seek food.¹⁾

Thomas postulates four moral cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and moderation, the second of which he pronounces the principal one of all, and divides into commutative and distributive; and under the head of commutative justice he discusses our topic, whilst — as was and has remained usual — speaking of homicide.²⁾ Q. „Utrum liceat alieni occidere seipsum.“ A. „At vel seipsum, vel innocentem sine speciali Dei revelatione aut jussu occidere, semper est illicitum.“ We may safely omit much both of the manner and matter of his genuinely scholastic argumentation, in the course of which the Scriptures, Aristoteles and Augustinus are referred to, and weighed one against the other. Proceeding, therefore, at once to the sum and substance of his conclusions, suicide is not permissible for three reasons, viz. it is not only a sin against Justice, but against

¹⁾ Vide pp. 117—129 of Hoertel, *Thomas von Aquino und seine Zeit*, 1846.

²⁾ Secunda secundae partis, Quaestio XLIV. Articulus V. Cf., however, ibid. Quaesit. LIX, art. III, ad secundum. The edit. before me is the one published at Lyons anno 1738.

necessary self-love, i. e. against self, society, God — on which occasion he employs as one of his arguments the well-known biblical word: „he lets be born, and lets die“, etc. — Even the criminal may not kill himself, because nobody is his own judge, but must await, as sentence so execution, from the Powers that be. — It is not even permitted to kill one's self for the purpose of escaping violation, because one may not one's self commit a *greater* crime than that would be which another would commit; and fornication or adultery are minor crimes than murder, especially self-murder. (He thought virginity preferable to matrimony; ¹⁾ but, upon the whole, he was perhaps less severe or less urgent on this point than e. g. Hieronymus.) The woman, whose chastity is imperilled, is not guilty, if she do not consent. Lucia (?) says: the body is only then contaminated, when the spirit takes part in the contamination. — The sinfulness of suicide, however, consists chiefly in its being the greatest injury a man can do unto himself, and irreparably taking away time for repentance and penance. — He enumerates all possible reasons — somewhat in the style of Augustinus — which a person may have for killing himself, and also negatives their justifiableness in pretty much the same manner. He agrees with Augustinus about Samson, but unhesitatingly condemns Razis for slaying himself to escape an ignominious condemnation, because it is a weakness of soul which shrinks from the disgrace of punishment; courage it is or may be, but it is not *true* courage: on which last point, therefore, he is still more severe than Augustinus himself.

Criticism is here an easy matter. Thomas' process of argumentation is not more circumstantial, but it is more methodical than that which Augustinus had pursued. If, however, the question be about thoughtfulness, vigor, impressiveness, or even perspicacity, the prize would unquestionably have to be awarded to the churchfather, not to the scholastic, who has really nothing new to offer, and, if he start and in his way satisfactorily solve all the difficult points which might suggest themselves to either the divine or the layman of his time, they are anything but either the most potent or most plausible objections which in reality might be raised.

Two brief literary remarks. Firstly. In §. 17 already I hinted that Dante's ethical view of the guilt of self-destruction was Tho-

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. *secunda secundae partis, quaest. CLII, de Virginitate, artt. I—V.*

mistic: so were likewise his dogmatical notions about the state of departed souls apparently identical with this teacher's whom he sees in Paradise (vide Cant. X). Secondly. Howsoever much more pathos and freshness modern catholic divines may have managed to put into their treatment of our topic, what they advance has remained essentially Thomistic too;¹⁾ and, indeed, the general run of modern protestant anti-suicidal moralists have closely adhered to Thomas' methodic trilogy: self, society, God.²⁾

V. Caesarius (in the 13th century).

Beside the above by far longest and most complete mediaeval reasoning about suicide, what few other incidental utterances — all of them by the by also *against* suicide — have crossed my path are, perhaps, scarcely worth mentioning, and are certainly not worth dwelling upon. Moreover, the greater number of them intertwine themselves with the anti-suicidal laws of the church, and will therefore naturally present themselves to us in the second Chapter of this Section. Only one testimony here as a sample. The in §. 73 mentioned Caesarius, himself a monk of the Cisterciensian order in the diocese of Cologne, and said to have been an erudite and a pious man, in a very garrulous, but yet extremely instructive, book of his, after having recounted sundry cases of suicide on the part of monks and nuns which we shall specify in the next §, closes one of them with the following brief judicial dialogue³⁾ Apollonius. „Quid sentiendum est de animabus istorum?“ Caesarius. „Si sola tristitia et desperatio, non frenesis, aut mentis alienatio, in causa fuerit, *haud dubium quin damnati sint*. De furiosis et fatuis, in quibus ratio non vivit, quaestio non est quin salventur, quocunque modo moriantur, si tamen prius habuerunt charitatem.“

Indeed, there cannot exist any doubt about the fact that the orthodox catholics in the middle ages as a body held suicide in the utmost abhorrence. Much that will serve as proof of this assertion will reveal itself to us (vide the next Chapter) in the tone and tenor of the mediaeval ecclesiastical laws; and I will here merely state that, in a but little known treatise by a certain Reinerius Sacconi

¹⁾ Cf. e. g. Fuchs' *System der christlichen Sittenlehre*, 1851, pp. 367, 368.

²⁾ Perhaps, one of the simplest, calmest, most popularly put brief developments of this kind is Fischhaber's *philosophische Untersuchung in his Zeitschrift für die Philosophie*, 1819, Heft 2, pp. 230—247. ³⁾ *Illustrium miraculorum et historiarum memorabilium libb. XII, Antwerp 1605, lib. IV, c. 44.*

(† 1259), who had once belonged to the Kathari, but subsequently apostatized from them, we find in the list of abominations with which he charges them, something very kindred to suicide enumerated. However, I'll quote his own words.¹⁾ „Quando autem aliquem in extremo vitae periculo recipere volunt, dant ei optionem, utrum velit in regno coelorum esse cum sanctis Martyribus vel Confessoribus. Si autem elegerit statum Martyrum, tunc *manutergio* ad hoc specialiter deputato, quod Teutonice vocatur *Untertuch*, ipsum strangulant ostio super eum clauso. Si autem Confessorum elegerit, tunc post manus impositionem nil dant ei ad esum, nec puram aquam ad bibendum, et ita fame ipsum perimunt.“ Sacchoni's tract, in the 6th chapter of which this communication occurs, bears the title „contra *Waldenses Haereticos*“; but, it is well known that there was originally an essential difference between the Kathari and the Waldenses, and that the latter were, partly from ignorance and partly from malice, often confounded with the former, whose denomination primarily belonged to the Novatiani of the 3rd century, who on account of their strictness against apostates etc. considered themselves peculiarly *puri* (καθαροί) and holy, but in the 12th century or thereabouts was applied, in the form of Gazari, *Reher* etc., as an abusive and condemnatory term to all prae-reformatorial parties who in theory or practice dissented and deviated from the papal church-community. — What measure of credit, however, may be attached in suchlike matters to the mediaeval *haeresiologists* we may compute by the narratives of the mediaeval *hagiologists*, one of whom²⁾ assures us among various similar matters in his brief, but in its day very popular, work most gravely that Saint Martin of Tours, passing by the place in which a servant of some great family had just hanged himself, forthwith entered the chamber in which the corpse lay, and by reclining over it and praying awhile imparted life to it again!!

§. 73. THE OCCURRENCE AND CAUSES OF SUICIDE IN MEDIAEVAL CHRISTENDOM.

When we survey the characteristics of the middle ages in Europe, as far as our topic comes into play, we might, perhaps, a priori

¹⁾ Maxima Bibliotheca veterum patrum, T. XXV, p. 272. ²⁾ Sulpicius Severus, de vita S. Martini, c. VIII, p. 187 in Vorst's edit. 1668.

predict that suicide would be somewhat likely to prove a pretty frequent phenomenon, and for the following reasons.

Firstly. That great Migration of Peoples which is generally considered as the mark-stone of the commencement of the middle ages, and by means of which Christianity gradually made its way among previously Barbaric tribes, introduces upon the stage of European history nations among whom, one and all, as we showed or hinted in Sect. II, suicide was more or less viewed as a virtue or at all events frequently resorted to as a refuge. It is true, the adoption of christianity could not fail to soften down, modify, remove much of this, and the peremptory and menacing prohibitions of the church (vide the next Chapter) would naturally tend to place a ban upon suicide; but, to banish it completely must appear to have been too difficult a task. So-called personal courage might still linger in the soul as an idol to be cherished and worshipped; and, as Chivalry and Knight-errantry still retain vestiges of earlier pagan habitudes, so, for instance, the Duel, itself a species of twofold homicide, murder and self-slaughter, experienced little or no difficulty in establishing itself as a practice both honorable and popular. It would, therefore, be strange, if actual self-slaughter had not occasionally insinuated itself, and maintained its ground, as a sign and proof of manfulness, independence, sense of honor, and feeling of liberty. Individual examples of laymen and laywomen in the middle ages who committed suicide under purely *secular* influences and from purely *secular* motives I have noted down in the course of my readings; but, they need not here detain us, since the frequent emphatic and reiterated interdiction of suicide in the mediaeval ecclesiastical and civil laws (vide the next Chapter) would seem to bear sufficient testimony to the necessity of such *legal interference*, and the *said necessity* in its turn, of course, involves the occurrence of the action.

Secondly. Nor are instances entirely unknown to me in which more specifically, not to say anything about those violent domestic disruptions incidental to Feudalism, the merciless application of the torture, the barbarous institution of vassalage, and the horrid visitation of leprosy drove men and women into self-destruction, as an asylum.

Thirdly. But, far more characteristic of the middle ages, as also far more important and interesting in a philosophical and psychological point of view, is such suicide as was at that period of history

evoked by the *spirit of devotion* itself, by the form and character which in *Monkeries* and *Nunneries* Religion itself assumed.

Among the legally established and governmentally supported buildings on this earth of ours *three* more especially may, perhaps, be said to contain within their walls unspeakably much of what might seem to plant and foster those dark passions und deep miseries which would lead our fellow-mortals to seek a refuge from either wasting grief, or withering remorse, or torturing ennui, or menacing madness — in self-destruction. I allude to eastern harems, to barbarous dungeons, and to catholic cloisters. — Of what occurs in these first-mentioned haunts of disappointment, jealousy, intrigue, vindictiveness, grief, listlessness and manifold iniquity, we Occidentals know but little, and need scarcely care to know more, since we could not remove the evil, even were we to fathom it ever so fully. Merely annotating that the anti-suicidal tenets and precepts of Muhammadanism (vide Sect. III) here too, probably, prevent many suicides that otherwise would take place, we shall do well not to stop to specify the reasons which, as I once read, induced, for instance, many of the inmates of the Harem of one of the late Sultans to kill themselves. — Equally little do I myself at least know about what in this respect took place in the castle-keeps of the feudal lords and petty tyrants of the middle ages, in the carcens of the Vehmgericht, or the prisons of the Inquisition; for, „bills of mortality“ were not published in those days about the time and manner when and how the doomed inmates of subterraneous vaults and narrow cells, sunless, starless, voiceless, ended their days, or, rather, perhaps, we should say, their *nights*. That, however, many of them really did await, from weary year unto weary year, their natural end, and did not hasten it by — for lack of sharper and speedier instruments of death — e. g. holding back their nausea-inhaling breath, or refusing their scantily apportioned food, we must, I presume, believe; and the more of them really did so, the more we may marvel, as I think, when e. g. the prison-chambers of Ratisbon or the lead-cellars of Venice are before „our mind's eye“, and e. g. Silvio Pellico's story of his prison-years at our memory's bidding. Did the guilty fear to accelerate Eternal Judgment? Did the innocent imbibe heroism from their own consciousness? Did hope never cease to breathe on the sanguine? Did the phlegmatic beast-like resign themselves to the mere force of habitude? Did the loving and imaginative manage to conjure up

in their inner self a phantasmagoric world full of ideal beauty and fondness? Did the gloomy and vindictive find occupation and solace in brooding over visions of terrible revenge? Did the over-sensitive go mad, and work out of their „heated brain“ phantom-forms and phantom-sounds that peopled the solitude, and made music in the silence? Let the sphinx of poor enigmatic human nature solve her own riddles! — More we shall be able to tell, and more our theme calls upon us to say, about the suicide-breeding atmosphere of the third and last kind of institutions to which allusion was above made, the cloisters of mediaeval christendom.

Cassianus, a christian monkish writer of the 5th century, from whom we already in §. 13 borrowed the narrative about Hero, utters in another pious ecclesiastical work of his¹⁾ what follows. „There is a kind of melancholy which is deserving of abhorrence, because it does not incite man to mend his walk, to repent of the faults he has committed, but plunges him into bottomless despair. It was this that had seized upon Cain, and did not permit him to repent of his fratricide; *Judas fell a victim to it, and hanged himself with a rope*, instead of immediately flying to that means which could atone for his treachery against the Lord.“ And the same writer, as quoted by Du Cange s. v. *acedia* or *accidia*²⁾ (*tristitia*, *molestia*, *anxietas*, *vel taedium* *dicitur indurata mentis tristitia*, *quae, dum quis laborat, vertitur in taedium*; Suidas: ἀκηδία, ἡ ῥαθυμία, ἀχθηδών, λυμή) defines and *limits* the above word (which, by the by, we find employed pretty frequently throughout the middle ages, e. g. up to the days of Bernhard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas) thus: „est taedium et anxietas cordis, *quae infestat Anachoretas et vagos in solitudine Monachos*.“ For which phenomenon Hieronymus already (epist. 4, according to Du Cange) sensibly accounts as follows. „Sunt qui humore cellarum, immoderatisque jejuniis, taedio solitudinis ac nimia lectione, dum diebus ac noctibus auribus suis personant, vertuntur in melancholiam, et Hippocratis magis fomentis, quam nostris monitis indigent.“ To Du Cange I owe likewise the following explanation and paraphrasis (Caesarius, lib. IV, c. 27). „*Acedia est ex confusione mentis nata tristitia, sive taedium et amaritudo animi im-*

¹⁾ De spiritu tristitiae, lib. IX. Opera omnia, edid. Gazaevs, 1642, p. 193.

²⁾ Glossarium mediae et intimae Latinitatis, edid. Henschel, Paris 1840, T. I, p. 51.

moderata, qua jucunditas spiritualis extinguitur, et quodam desperationis praecipitio mens in semetipsa subvertitur: dicitur autem Accidia, quasi Acida, eo quod opera spiritualia nobis acida reddat et insipida." But, the celebrated Dominican Vincent de Bauvais,¹⁾ whom Du Cange has not cited, shall afford us much more searching and minute information on this same strange and prevalent mediaeval monkish mental disease. „Dicendum est de quarto vitio capitali, quod est accidia; Circa quod considerata sunt quatuor: 1) quid sit accidia, et utrum sit peccatum; 2) utrum sit peccatum mortale; 3) quae movere possunt ad hoc vitium fugiendum; 4) de filiabus ejus. Accidia est quaedam tristitia aggravans quae ita deprimit animam hominis ut nihil ei agere libeat, et ideo accidia importat quoddam taedium bene operandi. And of its daughters, he avers that they are numerous „quod multis modis per accidiam peccat homo. Ejus autem filiae sunt hae: Dilatio, signities sive pigritia, tepiditas, pusillanimitas, inconstantia sive imperseverantia et inquietudo corporis, evagatio mentis, ignorantia, ociositas, verboritas sive multiloquium, murmur, taciturnitas mala, indiscretio, gravedo, somnolentia, negligentia, omisso, ingratitudo, indevotio, languor, *taedium* (vitae), impeditio bonorum, impenitentia, *desperatio*." And in connexion with the last mentioned effect Vincent proceeds to say that there are four things to consider. 1) utrum desperatio sit peccatum; 2) utrum possit esse sine infidelitate; 3) utrum sit maximum peccatorum; 4) quae dissuadent hoc horrendum flagitium esse summopere detestandum." And, the *fifth* reason which he assigns for the detestability of „desperatio" is this: that it sometimes leads man „ad *occisionem sui*", whereupon he adduces sundry examples, e. g. Achitophel, Judas, Pilatus, Nero, also Herod and Job (the latter in reference to ch. VII, vide §. 49).

But, coming now to facts which are in this § of more importance to us than mere terms, I'll commence, on the authority of Zimmermann's once so popular, but now almost forgotten, long-winded and discursive, rather entertaining than instructive, work, one copious chapter of which²⁾ is devoted to Monkdom in its earliest appearances and effects. Pachomius, formerly a soldier, and a pupil

¹⁾ Speculum morale, lib. III, pars VI, distinctiones I, II and XV, pp. 207, 208, 214 in the Venice edit. of 1493. He was tutor to the children of Saint Louis, and died 1264. ²⁾ Ueber die Einsamkeit, Th. I, Kap. 4, pp. 184, 185.

of the first celebrated monk Antonius, established already in the first quarter of the 4th cent. sundry cloisters in Tabenna, an uninhabited village on an island of the Nile, and expressly „recommended to his disciples above all things to reveal their temptations immediately to the most experienced and enlightened among their brethren, in order to ascertain from them the right way of disciplining themselves in cases of mental disease, he himself already having but too keenly experienced what things melancholy in cloisters effects, and he gave his solemn assurance: many monks have hurled themselves down from rocks, many ripped open their bowels with knives, or killed themselves in some one or other manner.“ — This it is, I presume, that Gibbon alluded to, when he in a casual note of his *Decline and Fall* (ch. 37, note 63) says: „I have read somewhere, in the *Vitae Patrum*, but I cannot recover the place, that *several*, I believe, *many*, of the monks, who did not reveal their temptations to the abbot, became guilty of suicide.“ — Zimmermann, however, further states that, according to the bishop Palladius, who was a friend of St. Chrysostomos', one nun in anger accused another nun of a crime, whereupon the accused immediately drowned herself, and the calumniatrix hanged herself.“ — Here the reader is also requested to recal to mind what I quoted in §. 69 from Gregory of Nazianz, and also the case of St. Chrysostomos' friend, Stagirus, which I mentioned in §. 70.

Proceeding to later times, the already mentioned Caesarius presents himself before us with sundry detailed narratives, four of which I will, in their substance, here record.¹⁾ „De sanctimoniali, quæ in fide dubitans et desperans, in Mosellam se præcipitavit.“ A nun, already advanced in years, and of exemplary piety, suddenly became troubled with the evil of sadness and tormented by the spirit of blasphemy; doubt and diffidence in such wise mastered her soul that she fell into despair, refused the sacraments, and believed that she would be everlastingly damned. The prior, her spiritual adviser, having threatened that, unless she desisted from, and repented of, her infidelity, her corpse should be ignominiously buried in the open field, she flung herself into the Moselle, was, however, got out again alive. „De converso, qui ex desperatione in piscina se suffocavit.“

¹⁾ Ubi supra, lib. IV, de tentatione, c. 40, c. 41, c. 42, c. 45, pp. 199—203; and vide also c. 43 and c. 44.

Though this poor individual's walk had been signalized by rigorous asceticism even up to his old age, so that he enjoyed the highest esteem from the entire Convent, he yet became a prey to extreme melancholy and despondency, imagined his sins so great that he could not expect God to pardon them, and, at last, rather than contend any longer with his burdensome despairings, he drowned himself in a reservoir which was close to the monastery. „De sanctimoniali, quae a quodam maligno Converso dementata, in puteum se praecipitavit.“ A young nun, won over by what our author calls „the magical arts“ of a monk, and no longer able to resist the promptings of temptation, endeavored to make her escape out of the convent which she now, under the influence of her maddening passion, repented having ever entered, but, being prevented, she cast herself into a well, and was drowned. — The fourth narrative concerns a Brunswick monk, Balduin by name, whom immoderate study and vigils had to such a degree mentally debilitated that he hanged himself by the bell-rope of his cloister; and, though his life was still saved, his Reason had for ever departed.

Our mediaeval chronicler was somewhat loath to tell these incidents, nor does he, not wishing to stigmatize any special monastic order, name the cloisters in which they happened; however, he, oddly enough, consoles himself somewhat (vide the conclusion of c. 40) by thinking that, haply, „Deus talia permittit“, in order that nobody, howsoever perfect, might become proud of his virtues and works, and that unto God alone, as the dispenser of every good gift, by each of us all Will and Power, every action and perfection might be ascribed.

It were bootless now-a-days to enquire, how such men as e. g. Basilus, Gregory of Nazianz, Chrysostomos, and Hieronymus could in the primitive christian ages do what lay within them to commend and uphold suchlike Institutions of wholesale *Soul-murder*, Institutions in which some of the very silliest and worst elements of Pythagorean silence, Stoical unnature, Cynical self-neglect, and Essene dreaminess were concentrated and systematized, Institutions which soon became all but numberless in Asia, Africa, and Europe, and, though somewhat less numerous and more humanised, still exist in all Catholic countries, and are of late attempted by Puseyism to be smuggled into Protestantism itself. — Surely, Jesus and his Apostles never taught that man was placed in this world for himself alone, so that

he would be justified in giving himself up to entire abstraction and recluse devotion at the expense of social duty, even if the purposes of self could really be best attained to by anachoretism and conventionalism. Surely, that self-mortification and abnegation of self which the New Testament insists on and promulgates as the commencement and condition of all virtue are something essentially different from, and even opposed to, suchlike would-be or real moral severity and austerity as early Christianity and later Catholicism have termed *asceticism*, veritable self-torture, mystical self-annihilation, as if sensuality could be weakened, sins atoned for, pure love of God attained to, saintship acquired, by martyring one's self into waste of self, and victimizing one's self to continuous worse than childish, because more than cruel, penances. Surely, when the Gospel proclaimed that „the body shall be a temple of the Holy Ghost“, it meant that our entire human personality should be pervaded by harmonious strength and hallowing beauty, that the fire of sanctification, which burns on the hearth of the innermost soul, should be visible and influential in the physical environments of that soul, that, because the Spiritual is in manifold manner necessarily conditioned by the Natural, the body itself should be conserved and elevated by care and skill, so that the Divine in man may present itself at all times worthily, and not as a fright and a phantom. — If what men call Religion, that inward, mystical, visionary thing of the soul, should not seem to demand this, Ethics at all events, religion raised, extended, vitalized into something tangible and practical, render this demand imperative; and from this standing-point, if I mistake not, Carlyle's simple and emphatic „wash thyself“ is worth all the askesis of modern Puseyism, all the trashy prescriptions about fasting and kneeling, vigils and orisons. The healthier and more vigorous the body, the less whimsical, morbid, sensual and selfish is the soul, speaking quite in general; and such mere *theatrical* asceticism as many among ourselves would fain now-a-days practise is, I ween, little better than vanity and hypocrisy whereby people would fain appear more godly than their neighbors.

When classical Paganism, more especially in its latest Neo-Platonic forms, taught its doctrine of self-mortification, it specifically placed beside it the prohibition of self-destruction, clearly discerning the necessity of the latter in conjunction with the former. Early and mediaeval Christianity was, in part at least, less clear-sighted and

philosophical in this particular. When the early church-historian Evagrius¹⁾ devoted a whole chapter to much of what is senseless and unnatural in that which was in this respect in his day (the 6th cent.) prevalent, and not only tolerated, but even applauded, he concludes by informing his readers that the said christian ascetics were „happy in their mode of existence here, happier in their departure hence, *on which they are ever intent, impatient to behold Him whom they desire*“; and we know that in the 5th cent. the pillar-saint Simeon Sisanites, of whom Gibbon incidentally states that he had, during his long noviciate, been repeatedly saved from „pious suicide“, passed 37 years of his life in religious contemplation on the summits of five successive pillars, each higher than the other, the last being forty ells in height, and that so-called „sancti columnares“, imitators of his manner of life in aerial cloisters, actually continued in Christendom for 700 years. And, verily, suchlike outrages committed upon Nature, suchlike unreasonable temptations of God, were likely to become ever and anon visited by the wretchedness of lunacy, and by God-forsakenness in hours of great trial, so that, had not the ecclesiastical authorities of the middle ages, probably, considered it politic to conceal from the general public, as much of the loathsome scandals, so much of the melancholy-madness which so unfavorably and painfully characterized the cloisters, we should, as I take it, find many more cases of suicide recorded even in the laboriously compiled, but very unedifying, Hagiologies or Acta Sanctorum than we have now any means of becoming cognizant of.

How this matter stands in *more modern* Convents, this is not the place to enquire. Methinks, however, that from time to time sundry *better* men who, despite masks and mummeries, have become conscious of the claims of thought and the rights of conscience, and sundry *better* women who, in reposeless slumbers, were forced to realize unto themselves what it is *reluctantly* „to wither slowly on the lonely virgin stalk“, may and must also in later centuries, sooner or later, have terminated and still terminate their saddened and sickened career by a voluntary death,²⁾ which same death might almost be called *pious* in its impiety, i. e. when compared with that

¹⁾ H. E. lib. I, c. 21. ²⁾ Vide e. g. in this point of view Doblado's (the late J. Blanco White's) *Letters from Spain*, vol. I, p. 251. Mere hints on suchlike matters are sufficient: the imagination of anybody who knows the human heart has room and right to amplify and to anatomize.

horrid Molochism to which they had, without power of any other means of self-liberation, been ruthlessly immolated.

Returning, however, for one moment to the previously mentioned victims of „acedia“, we for our part would fain inscribe upon their self-made tombs as epitaph Gregory of Nazianz's simple line (the concluding one of the fragmentical quotation given, according to Billius' metrical version, in §. 69), ere he proceeds to liken them unto the victor's steed which, over-confident in its swift legs, runs far beyond the goal, unwilling or unable to allow itself to be reined in.

Ἦλαθι, Χριστὲ ἀναξ, παταῖς φρεσὶν ἀρραβίουςιν.¹⁾

§. 74. THE DEFENDERS OF SUICIDE SINCE THE REFORMATION.

The several antecedent and concomitant, both mediate and immediate, scientific, literary, social and political causes which tended partly to facilitate and partly to provoke, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, what has been justly and emphatically called *the Reformation*, are so familiar to every educated reader of history as to render any allusion to them here utterly superfluous. That the said reformatorial agitation and efficacy were *historically* decisive for the future destinies of Europe and civilized mankind, nobody can rationally deny; but, whether they were *religiously* salutary, is a question which will naturally remain a „vexed“ one, as long as there exist so-called Catholics and Protestants on this earth of ours. — Merely stating en passant that I have neither sympathy with, nor respect for, the various processes of argument by dint of which modern Romanists are wont to lower the Reformers and their Reforms, I must, nevertheless, at the same time avow that I cannot by any means bring myself to agree with the majority of our modern Protestants about the precise nature, the real value, and the final significance of the Church-Amelioration of the sixteenth century.

¹⁾ Here I will state by the way that the already quoted most recent French editor of Gregor's works, Caillaud, makes the following somewhat queer hypothesis and remark on our churchfather's having called the said suicidal monks „witnesses of truth“ (μάρτυρες ἀρετῆς). „Forte legendum αὐτοχτόι“, *suo ipsorum facinore*. Certe hujusmodi martyres non Dei ac virtutis, sed Diaboli martyres sunt. Quare Gregorii verba non nisi ironice dicta; sunt accipienda. (Opera, T. II, p. 1001.) I, however, more than doubt both his conjecture and his conclusion.

First of all, when many of our anti-Romish controversialists expend much ink and breath on describing to their readers or hearers e. g. the monstrous private iniquities of several of the Popes, the infamous misdoings in numerous Cloisters, the demoralizing venality of Indulgences, the degrading ignorance and ridiculous credulity of the Multitude, the martyr-sufferings of the small heroic band of those who before the days of Protestantism had also in their manner and measure „protested“, and signed and sealed their Protest with their own blood: — their task seems to me in and by itself needless, and their performance of it often distasteful in the extreme. For, one need not go beyond what some of the Popes and Councils had themselves admitted, in search of sufficient reasons for the justification and necessity of a vigorous and an organized attack upon the Hierarchy and its Regiment at the time of which we are speaking, for a radical reform not of discipline only, but of doctrine also.

Secondly, however, if those earnest, thoughtful, learned and energetic men who appeared on the stage as the chief actors in the great reformatorial drama of the 16th century, a Luther, a Melancthon, a Zwingli, a Calvin, a Beza, etc., precious though their efforts and labors must remain in the grateful remembrance of every lover of truth and virtue, aspired and designed to become more or less *infallible* guides to after-generations in matters theological, they but ill understood their own mission and the nature of the cause in which they had engaged. What they were called upon to do, was to bid many misleading traditions, superstitious fooleries, and hollow formalities vanish, and to invite their fellow-men to inhale the genial atmosphere of classic culture and to drink at the spiritualizing fountain of biblical tuition, and thus, having swept away many abuses and laid bare many errors, to enable and summon their followers to think for themselves on all highest topics, and to tread, each on his own responsibility, the path of religious freedom „wherewith Christ had made them free.“ For, most assuredly, if the Reformers themselves claimed and exercised the liberty of casting off from their own shoulders the yoke of a time-hallowed, well-knit, all-swaying system of religious belief and practice, they could not reasonably suppose themselves warranted in laying upon the shoulders of succeeding generations their own individual views as authoritatively binding with a „thus far, and no further.“ No! that Reformation of theirs did not exclude future reforms, nor was their Protest to

silence later protests. Their work was valuable for their age, but not on that account valid for all future ages. The results at which they arrived, the effects which they produced were only „the commencement of the end“, but in no wise the final termination itself. The very watchword of their warfare, *rightly comprehended*, was liberty of thought, faith, worship, under the guidance and tuition of Christism: why, then, should not also *their* Confessions, Catechisms, Articles, Homilies, Symbola, and Liturgies in due season and in their turn be again *protested against* by those whom their own Reformation itself has once for ever made free from all sacerdotal infallibilities, whether these go by the name of Pope or Prelate, Priest or Parson? All veritable Protestantism, therefore, is an everlasting battle of the individual mind, heart, conscience, life against whatsoever evidences itself as untrue or only half-true, no matter whether a Luther, a Calvin, a Zwingli, mere men like ourselves, believed and taught it, or the contrary; no matter, whether Augsburg Confessions or Episcopal Articles upheld or condemned it. Reformatorial Protestantism is essentially a truly *Republican* form of government, as it were, for religion and morality, which thenceforward were and are not called upon to work for any earthly Master, Caste, or System, but for themselves alone, for each soul and for all mankind; and thence it has worked with all the more vigor and zeal, freshness and love, here and there and ever and anon at all events.

— Any different conception of the Reformation, any different homage to Protestantism seem to me at least a contradiction in terms, a misknowledge of privileges, a forfeiture of rights, a mere empty sound, a bar to all genuine philosophy, science, progress, aye, and into the bargain even an exchange of dazzling Poetry of the Past for nude Prose in the Present. — —

None of the principal Reformers can be said to have discussed the topic of suicide elaborately, systematically, and the reason for this phenomenon is sufficiently obvious. They very naturally had to occupy themselves, in their controversies against Rome, far more with points of doctrine and discipline than with purely *philosophico-ethical* questions. Moreover, they could not but feel that what the Fathers, especially Augustinus, had advanced, and the Scholastics, especially Thomas Aquinas, had developed, and what, therefore, was the universally accepted view in the Catholic Church, embodied pretty much all of what they themselves would or could have had

to say on our subject; indeed, to a similar effect is such little in their works as I have found bearing, directly or indirectly, on the matter.

(Luther). I have on more than one occasion (vide §§. 13, 32, 63) already drawn attention to sundry rather super-rigorous than exactly judicious passages in Luther's works. Here, however, two more still more important ones in their original form. In his *Äußerreden* or Colloquia, he declares suicide generally the work of the Devil, but maintains that it must nevertheless be severely punished by man for example's sake, though not all suicides are therefore to be considered as damned.¹⁾ „Viel von denen, so sich selbst und Leben bringen, die werden von dem Teufel getrieben und von ihm getödtet, wie die Leute von Straßentäubern, sind ihr selbst nicht mächtig. Wenn solche Grempel nicht bisweilen geschähen, so fürchteten wir unsern Herrn Gott nicht. Darum müssen wir in Furcht stehen, und Gebitten, er wolle uns vor dem Teufel behüten; auch muß man hart mit solchen Gehenkten umgehen, nach Ordnung der Rechte und Gewohnheit, auf daß sich die rohen und sichern Leute fürchten; nicht daß sie alle darum verdammt sind.“ — In his Preface to the second book of the *Maccabees*,²⁾ he mentions the story of Razis among his objection to its being received into the number of the sacred writings (the first book he would fain receive). „Hat auch einen harten Raster im 14. Kapitel an dem Razias, der sich selbst erwürgete. Welches auch St. Augustinus und die alten Väter ansieht. Denn solch Grempel taugt nicht, und ist nicht zu loben, ob's gleich gebuldet und wohl angelegt werden mag.“

(Melancthon). The only say of his on our subject I am acquainted with is brief, by way of exposition and vindication of Aristoteles,³⁾ but hyper-peripatetically severe, as I take it, and somewhat forced and inaccurate in its allusions to legal points (vide §§. 34, 35). „Redit Aristoteles ad quaestionem supra motam, a sese interficiens, ut Cato, injuriam sibi faciat, et acute respondet, facere eum injuriam civitati, non sibi, quia civitas prohibet necari civem a se, vel ab alio. Supra autem respondit planius, scienti et volenti non fit injuria, scilicet, simpliciter volenti, et in re, quam

¹⁾ Werke, B. XXII, pp. 1938, 1939 in Walch's edit. ²⁾ Ibid. B. XIV, p. 97. ³⁾ *Ethicae doctrinae elementa, et enarratio libri quinti (Aristotelis) Ethicorum*, p. 223. The edit. before me bears neither date nor place of publication; but the work itself was composed, I believe, about anno 1550.

potest velle. Cato non habet potestatem sui corporis, sicut recte dicunt Jurisconsulti. Nemo est dominus membrorum suorum. Recte igitur dicitur, Catonem et sibi facere injuriam, quia etsi vult necem, tamen velle eam non licet, sed Deus et lex magis sunt domini nostri corporis, et rerum nostrarum, quam nos ipsi. Graeca Phrasis est, Non jubet se interficere, pro, jubet se non interficere."

(Calvin). In his unquestionably masterly dogmatico-ethical systematic work, he is at some trouble to meet, counteract, nullify any Hegesiac inferences which might have otherwise been drawn from some of his own previous assertions and lamentations touching the imperfections and miseries of *bodily* and *temporal* human life. The anti-suicidal design and purport of the following few passages will speak for themselves.¹⁾ „Neque in hac tantum parte constare p̄is animis debet illa tranquillitas et tolerantia: verum ad omnes etiam casus: quibus obnoxia est praesens vita, extendatur necesse est. Ergo nemo se rite abnegavit, nisi qui se totum ita resignavit Domino ut omnes vitae suae partes ejus arbitrio gubernari ferat. Qui vero sic animo compositus erit, quicquid accidat, nec miserum se reputabit, nec de sua sorte cum Dei invidia conqueretur. Quam vero necessaria sit haec affectio, inde patebit, si consideres quot accidentibus subjecti simus. Ergo si cum caelesti vita terrena comparetur, non dubium quin facile et contemnenda et procutanda sit. Odio certe habenda nunquam est, nisi quatenus nos peccato tenet obnoxios. quanquam ne illud quidem odium proprie in ipsam convertendum est. Utcunque sit, nos tamen ita ejus vel taedio vel odio affici decet, ut finem ejus desiderantes, parati quoque simus ad arbitrium Domini in ea manere. quo scilicet taedium nostrum sit procul ab omni murmure et impatientia. Est enim instar stationis, in qua nos Dominus collocavit, tandiu nobis conservanda quoad ille revocarit (we are here on Pythagorean ground). Itaque (he has been commenting on Phil. I, 23) si Domino vivere ac mori nos decet, *ejus arbitrio relinquamus mortis vitaeque nostrae terminum.*"

(Beza). When only five years of age, Beza had, strange to say, contemplated and attempted suicide. He and a somewhat elder and far more determined cousin of his had been infected with a malignant eruption on the head against which very violent and

¹⁾ Institutio Christianae Religionis, lib. III, cap. 7, sect. 10, and cap. 9, sect. 4, pp. 242 and 248 of the edit. Genevae 1592.

painful remedies were applied, and they were every morning taken by a servant to the surgeon's. Finding, however, this mode of cure insupportable, the cousin proposed that they should together throw themselves into the Seine, and little Beza soon allowed himself to be persuaded. But, whilst both of them were hastening to effect their purpose, their uncle accidentally met them, and, of course, prevented them from doing so. Mark, now, the following strong anti-suicidal expressions in Beza's subsequent narrative, as contained in a letter which he addressed, when already a Reformer, to his paternal teacher, Volmarius Rufus.¹⁾ *Hic vero memini, et animus horret meminisse*.... „Jam igitur hoc unum supererat ut nos miseros perderet Satan, quum Dominus, nostri misertus, effecit“..... „Ita me igitur Dominus jam tum mirabiliter velut ex ipsius Satanae faucibus liberavit.“

(Zwingli). There has not appeared to me to be any allusion whatsoever in his works to our subject; whoso, however, has perused this clear-headed and noble-hearted Reformer's exquisite lay,²⁾ composed whilst he was laboring under an attack of the Plague, cannot possibly experience any difficulty in divining what must have been his sentiments in regard to it.

And, by far the greater number of Protestant as well as Catholic Moralists also, in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, have subscribed pretty unconditionally to the opinions promulgated and determined by Churchfatherism and Scholasticism on the topic of our enquiry, occasionally superadding some mystic, sentimental, paraenetic, dialectic, or diaetetic by-work of their own, and often couching their say in greater elegance of diction, but rarely employing any novel argumentative force in the main. Therefore, neither historic interest nor philosophical gain would attach to our specifying and discussing the numerous Manuals of Moral Philosophy, medical and juridical Essays, Monographs, Tracts, Sermons which have issued from the press since the Reformation, and in which suicide is disapproved, argued against, condemned. Many of them — they are composed chiefly by Germans, Englishmen and Frenchmen — have

¹⁾ On pp. 3 and 4: it is prefixed to the Genevese edit. 1595 of his *confessio christianae fidei, et ejusdem collatio cum Papticis Haeresibus*. Vide also Schlosser's *Leben des Theodor von Beza und des Peter Martyr Vermigli*, 1800, pp. 16, 17. ²⁾ In vol. III of Schuler and Schulthess' collective edition of his writings.

been already mentioned for various purposes in the course of this Treatise, and some others we shall still have to name incidentally by way of illustration and comment. But, upon the whole, they need not concern us over-much; we may take for granted that their existence is known to everybody interested in such matters; and the greater or minor degree of orthodoxy or rationalism, acrimony or mildness with which the anti-suicidal arguments are handled, need not detain us. Therefore, as the superscription to this § indicated, I henceforward deviate from the plan I have hitherto pursued, and shall select only such works as have aimed at vindicating the Christian's right wilfully and consciously to shorten his own days by a deed of violence; for, performances of this description are veritable „curiosities of literature“, or *monstrosities*, if you prefer a certainly less charitable, but perhaps, according to the estimate of some, a more graphic, term.

The matter may be said to stand about thus.

Subsequently to, and in consequence of, the reformatorial movement and efficacy of the 16th century, familiarity with the systems of classical philosophy ever increased, insight into the spirit of Roman legislation became more thorough, admiration of the institutes and habitudes of the ancient Republics grew, and some of their foremost self-slaughteous heroes became objects of extreme reverence: which things unitedly might easily incline or induce modern thinkers to judge of pro-suicidal theorems by a standard approximating to that of Greece and Rome themselves. Moreover, when we consider not only the comparative silence of the Scriptures on our topic, but also the relative difficulty of our topic itself, and the numerous and various attempts which were sooner or later made to remove the question of Duty out of the wonted and artificial sphere of theology and casuistry into the wider and more free one of philosophy and politics, we cannot much wonder that in the process of re-considering and re-arguing the matter of suicide not a few metaphysicians, historians, and even theologians should have deemed themselves warranted in returning to something very like Stoic or Epikuric tenets, or other antique classical modes of thinking and feeling, in reference to it.

Well then, whilst wandering over the annals of the literature of the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries — of Poetic productions we have spoken already in our third introductory chapter —, not a few Prosaists have presented themselves to us as champions of sui-

side, some of them with elaborate dissertations, others with brief essays, others with mere epistles, or even only more or less incidental hints; and I shall not shrink from the somewhat irksome task of introducing these same writers, the *principal* ones at all events, to the reader's notice, and in *chronological* order. About the authors themselves I shall say only what may seem fit to shed light upon their respective pre-suicidal utterances, and about these utterances only what is needed to render them clear. If they be contained in a more or less lengthy monograph, I shall confine myself to critical-historical details about its origin and fate, and mention the chief verdicts which have been passed on its merits or demerits, since no epitome or abstract could represent either its entire spirit or its stylistic peculiarity; if they, on the contrary, occur as a mere item in some work of a more general tendency, I shall introduce the pertinent passages themselves, or some of them at least, in order to save the reader the trouble of picking them out of the work itself.

Several of the publications in question are *extremely rare*, and *difficult to procure*, as we shall learn in the sequel; but, with one exception which will be specified in its place, I have myself inspected every book of this kind to which our attention will be directed in this §.

L. Thomas More († 1535).

I hesitated some little time, whether I should speak of the *Utopia* („de optimo reipublicae statu, deque nova insula Utopia“) in this §, or reserve it for the next Chapter, or allude to it in §. 72, or even already in §. 34. However, sundry reasons have induced me to bring it forward *here*. Firstly. It is true, the *Utopia* was in point of date (anno 1516) an ante-reformatorial composition, and its author is well known to have sacrificed his dignities and emoluments, his liberty and his life rather than submit to the conditions upon which his royal master, Henry VIII, introduced what was called the Reformation into our land. All honor to him for this! A gifted, erudite, earnest, sincere man might verily object to the sudden transfer of ecclesiastical supremacy from the Tiara to the Crown, object to „the Defender“ of the *old Faith* becoming „the Head“ of the *new Church*, object to seeing adroit sophistry and narrow-minded vanity usurping the office of spiritual dictatorship, and prescribing creed and worship according to mere individual temperies and tyrannous fancies. A *better* and *wiser* and *fuller* kind of Reformation

would, I ween, have found also Sir Thomas More among its abettors; for — the Utopia breathes the spirit of genuine Reform, was a harbinger of even that *ultra* (viz. deistical) Reform which in the 17th and 18th centuries assumed so bold and vigorous a character in England; it is — to borrow the brief, but faithful, delineation which Niedner¹⁾ gives thereof — „the image of an Ideal-State, a civil and religious community in which, properly speaking, a disposition, in accordance with Nature, of all social relationships as bringing about universal happiness of life is the sole (eudaemonistic) idea, and in which Deism as the alone universal religion, in a somewhat indefinitely maintained attitude to the christian religion, is to reign, with the necessary retention of the belief in immortality, providence, and retribution.“ Secondly. If, however, the matter stand thus, Moore (vide the work quoted in the Preface) was in error, when he hinted that the author of the Utopia probably did not mean Raphael to be a Christian, and, consequently, *did not intend Raphael's theory on our topic to be adopted into a christian community*. For, christian or no christian, More evidently masked behind the name and person of the said fictitious Raphael *his own genuine*, if dreamy and fantastic, yet amiable and exalted, convictions, whether he satirize this or that really existent error and corruption in England and other European countries at that period,²⁾ whether he be speaking about dress, marriages, religious toleration, or — suicide. In other words, the Utopia is a descriptive political fiction, like unto e. g. Plato's Republic, in which its author, whilst inter alia, just like Plato himself, absolutely affirming the religious inadmissibility of suicide per se („God has forbidden us, not only to take away the life of our fellow-man, but also our own“, lib. I), also, again like Plato in a certain fashion, with theoretical minuteness and deliberate positiveness approves, defends, recommends such legalized magistratic permission to commit suicide under certain specified circumstances as was practised e. g. in ancient Massalia. But, the relevant passage³⁾ in faithful version runs thus. „I have already mentioned with how much con-

¹⁾ Geschichte der christlichen Kirche, 1846, pp. 362, 728. ²⁾ We might in this point of view compare, e. g. Usbek in Montesquieu's far less ingenious or pure-minded lettres Persannes. The Latin medium, however, which More chose would keep his speculations from the uneducated and illiterate multitude to whom alone they might have proved dangerous. ³⁾ Lib. II, pp. 193, 194 in the Amsterdam edit. 1631.

cern the Utopians took care of the sick who are not allowed to want for anything, whether in medicine or diet, that can contribute to their recovery. Such unfortunates as labor under incurable diseases receive every consolation, every attendance, all moral and physical alleviations suited to render life bearable unto them. But, if those incurable diseases be associated with violent pains which nothing can scare away 'or soothe, the priests and magistrates visit the patient and advise him to the only thing they deem best for him under these circumstances. They represent to him that he is denuded of the enjoyments and functions of life; that he is only surviving his own death and thereby becoming a burden to himself as to others. They instigate him not to nourish any longer the evil which is consuming him, and to die courageously, since existence is only a chain of tortures for him. They say to him: be of good cheer, break the fetters which burden you, and quit voluntarily the prison of life, or, at least, permit others to liberate you out of it. Your death is not an impious rejection of the benefactions of existence: it is the termination of a terrible torture. — Obedience in this case to the voice of the priests who are the organs of the Divinity, is considered the accomplishment of a religious and holy work. Those who allow themselves to be convinced, put an end to their lives by voluntary abstinence from food (*inedia*, vide §. 9), or, sometimes also they are put to sleep by a mortiferous somnific draught, and thus they die without perceiving it. Those who will not quit life are, nevertheless, treated with the most affectionate attention and care; if they die, public opinion honors their memory. — That person who kills himself without a reason which has been approved of by the Magistrate and the Priest, is declared unworthy of earth and fire: his body is not buried, but cast ignominiously into a morass."

II. Montaigne († 1592).

A nobleman, a layman, living to his studies and his pleasures, thoroughly conversant with the writings of the ancient classics, and equally versed in the passions and pursuits of man and society, Montaigne, though he apparently did not care for literary fame, became, as it were, the father of French prose-literature, and, though he remained a catholic, may be looked upon almost — and this is the point which here alone concerns us — as the leader of modern philosophical Skepticism. „What do I know?“ was his motto; „so-

phistic poetry" his definition of philosophy. Nor would we individually quarrel with him on account of his quaint and graphic mode of expressing his skepticism, as little as we could deny to him an unquestionable right to take greater delight „in the process of thinking than in the results of reasoning.“ The far more erudite and acute Lessing would have preferred, had the choice been left to him, „that hand in which the search after truth lay to the hand in which truth itself had been proffered.“ But, what we might not so willingly approve of in Montaigne is a sort of trifling and dalliance with the questions he proposes and the answers he adduces, his free and easy kind of indifference and recklessness about attaining to any clear and definite results on this or that point he brings forward and discusses.

We may say that in something like half a dozen of his equally instructive and amusing, equally original and amiable „Essais“ he has treated of self-destruction, either en passant as it were, or also specifically and exclusively.¹⁾ His method, if method it can be called, is this. He produces from all sorts of authors, the ancient classics, however, more especially, a vast number of philosophical arguments, poetic passages, historical narratives both in favor and disfavor of suicide, but chiefly such as are in favor thereof, and occasionally pauses to comment on the one or the other of them at considerable length, but generally in a somewhat negligent and incoherent manner, and sometimes in a rather distastefully frivolous tone, so that he himself would appear not to have aimed at any reconciliatory and determining result, and his reader consequently becomes more or less puzzled to discover what Montaigne really intended to convey as his own preponderating impression. Thence, modern writers on our theme have variously interpreted his sentiments; Stäudlin and Moore, for instance, in their respective monographs, more particularly the former, have understood his opinions to be much less pro-suicidal than they have appeared to such *French* writers themselves as I have had an opportunity of consulting. For instance, the pious and keen-sighted Jansenist rigorist Pascal exclaims:²⁾ „ses sentiments sur l'homicide volontaire et sur la mort sont horribles“; and the flippant Deslandes incorporated in his defence of suicide³⁾ not a little

¹⁾ Lib. I, ch. 19, and ch. 36; liv. II, ch. 3, ch. 11, ch. 13, ch. 29; liv. III, ch. 4. Our quotations will be made from Coste's edit. of 1727. ²⁾ Oeuvres de Pascal, T. II, p. 378 in the edit. of 1819. ³⁾ Réflexions sur les grands hommes morts en badinant, 1714.

from Montaigne's *Essais* by way of establishing his own views. (I am aware that Pascal employs e. g. in his *Provinciales* the term „homicide volontaire“ in the more comprehensive sense of *murder* in general; but in the passage just quoted it is explained by the French editors of his works as signifying *suicide* specifically. — As to Deslandes' little book, it is an utterly frivolous and a somewhat senseless performance, wherefore I shall not recur to it more specially in the sequel of this §. His pro-suicidal utterances stand chiefly in ch. XXII, where he winds up his assurances that in certain instances suicide might be not only pardonable, but glorious, that a continued painful distemper is a most satisfactorily justifiable cause, that man's inborn right over his life may be said to be a prerogative which places him above Nature herself, that it is an injustice to deem a man a criminal for having precipitated his own end, by calling upon his readers to confess sincerely that „the Ideas of Virtue and Vice are not a little confused, and even chimerical.“) However, we will now let our Essayist testify for himself.

Not to dwell upon his expressed cordial agreement (liv. I, 36 and liv. II, 11) with the encomiums of the Roman poets and pro-
phets on the death of Cato, I will select some few unequivocal passages from two other very lengthy Essays which are after all the principal ones on our topic, viz. „Que Philosophes, c'est apprendre à mourir“ (liv. I, 19) and „Coustume de l'Isle de Cea“ (liv. II, 3).

From the former. The contempt of death is one of the chief advantages of virtue „qu'aussi d'autant qu'au pis aller, la mort peut mettre fin, quand il nous plaira, et couper broche à tous autres inconveniens“ (towards the beginning). „La premeditation de la mort, est premeditation de la liberté. Qui a appris à mourir, il a desappris à servir. Il n'y a rien de mal en la vie, pour celuy qui a bien compris, que la privation de la vie n'est pas mal. Le sçavoir mourir nous afranchit de toute subjection et contraincte. Paulus Aemilius respondit à celuy que ce miserable Roy de Macedoine son prisonnier luy envoyoit, pour le prier de ne le mener pas en son triumphe, Qu'il en fust la requeste à soy-mesme“ (in the middle). By the by, let us remember that the ancient classical historians and moralists were in the habit of producing the behaviour of the unfortunate Perseus during his captivity as a striking instance of a cowardly and an undignified love of and clinging to life, and expressly narrate this same incident for the purpose of encouraging to

suicide. Vide e. g. Diod. Sik. in the Fragments, lib. XXXI; Cicero, T. Q. V. 46; and Plutarch, Moralia, edid. Reiske, T. VI, p. 747, who adds by way of comment: ἐξουσίαν διδοὺς αὐτῷ ἑαυτὸν ἀναλίσιν. — By virtue „l'âme est rendue maistresse de ses passions et concupiscenses; maistresse de l'indulgence, de la honte, de la pauvreté, et de toutes autres injures de fortune. Gagnons cet avantage qui pourra. C'est icy la vraye et souveraine liberté, qui nous donne dequoy faire la figue à la force, et à l'injustice, et nous moquer des prisons et des fers“ (in the middle). Here again the pro-suicidal drift is rendered clear by the immediately following quotation of that passage from Horace (lib. I, epist. 16) which we discussed in §§ 11 and 19.

From the latter (on the reason of the title, which would have been more properly „sur le suicide“, vide §. 34). Here, at the very outset, he almost forswears the character of a serious speculative moralist, but does not take much trouble to disguise the spirit of *applause* in which he introduces some of the pro-suicidal quotations and anecdotes with which this Essay may be fairly said to bristle. For our purpose, however, the two following passages shall suffice, since he *expressly* puts them forward as containing his own views. „Des violences qui se font à la conscience, la plus à éviter (scil. by suicide) à mon advis, c'est celle qui se fait à la chasteté des femmes, d'autant que (however, the reason he assigns the reader must be left to turn to for himself, since there is, according to Montaigne's naïve manner, a measure of indelicacy about it which we would rather be spared transcribing). This in the middle of the said Essai, the conclusion of which runs thus. „La douleur, et une pire mort, me semblent les plus excusables incitations“ (viz. to suicide).

Therefore, I cannot hesitate to regard Montaigne as a defender of suicide.

Among the many anecdotes which he introduces into this same essay, only one has appeared to me sufficiently peculiar to deserve mention. It is to the following effect. „I have been told that the relations of a prisoner of quality in France, when they had received intelligence that he would certainly be condemned, instigated a priest, in order to avoid the disgrace of such a death, to tell him that the best means for his liberation would be to commend himself by some vows to a certain saint and to remain eight days without any food, whatever drooping and weakness might befall him. He believed the

priest, and rid himself, without thinking of it, of both life and danger." — —

Perhaps, I ought not to dismiss Montaigne without adding a few words about an eminent cotemporary, an intimate friend, and a partial imitator of his, Charron († 1603), who, having been originally a lawyer, had from choice become a theologian. Both men, at least, are pretty universally classed together by our modern historians of philosophical literature as the earliest post-reformatorial (catholic) co-combattants against Scholasticism and its certitudes and methods; and Charron likewise has dwelt in his far-famed aphoristic system of Moral Philosophy ¹⁾ at considerable length on our topic, discussing the pros and cons touching its lawfulness or unlawfulness, but mixing up, we may perhaps affirm, the character of special pleader to a far greater extent than Montaigne with that of mere historian. It is not exactly easy to get hold of any guiding principle and decisive precept on our subject from amid much elaborate confusion and display of literature; but, he was NB. a *clerical dignitary*, and has so expressed himself that he is, I believe, generally or invariably accounted to have meant rather to disapprove than to approve of suicide; nay, if I mistake not, we might find his name in the one or the other book among the names of the explicit antagonists to suicide. At all events, e. g. Ritter, ²⁾ without, however, entering more closely into the matter, says expressly of Charron „auch der Selbstmord wird getadelt“, whereas he had affirmed as expressly of Montaigne „er vertheidigt den Selbstmord.“ But, since Charron's work itself is of easy access, I may content myself with referring the reader to what has appeared to me the most telling passage therein, ³⁾ his own judicial charge, as it were.

III. Justus Lipsius († 1606).

This renowned Belgian scholar and antiquarian's chief work in regard to our subject is, unquestionably, that manual introduction to Stoicism of which we made specific mention in §. 29, and from which I have more than once quoted in other portions of this Treatise.

The 23rd diss. of the above mentioned work is devoted to a *refutation* of the Stoic doctrine of suicide, and his abundant erudi-

¹⁾ De la Sagesse, liv. II, ch. XI, pp. 361—367 in the edit. 1662. Sagesse is here almost synonymous with Virtue or Morals. ²⁾ Geschichte der Philosophie, 1851, Th. X, p. 222. Anm. 2, and p. 193. Anm. 2. ³⁾ „Il faut comme pour sa defense — grand dommage de le cueillir plastost.“

tion placed a pretty considerable number of anti-suicidal dicta of both ancient and modern writers at his disposal which constitute the armory out of which he borrows his weapons. We have already seen that he was not always very scrupulous or correct in the use of those dicta; but this is not now our question. Enough, he would appear to have *identified* himself with those dicta, and, consequently, the said Dissertation in and by itself would entitle him to no mean rank in the host of post-reformatorial warriors against suicide. Here merely its commencement, and its conclusion. „Aud. Heus tu, an non aliquid inclinas?“ Lips. „Absit: respuo. Quod accuratius dixerim, candide et magno a me animo factum. Caussae praevaricari numquid debui? et pleraque omnia igitur attuli, nec dicta iis subduxi: quia vincere constitui, non circumscribere. Ecce enim omnes istos aliosque colores unâ Veritatis spongiâ jam ibo detersum. Audi, et intende“ „Sed omitto, et satis habeo universe docuisse, Mortem arbitrii nostri *non* esse: *nec Stoicis me, hac parte, suffragium dare.*“

Thus Lipsius the critic, zealous to prove from multifarious testimonies that suicide is a deed of cowardice, savageness (*saevitia*), injustice, folly, unnature. However, unfortunately for his consistency, there is a private epistle of his extant¹⁾ which strikes a very different chord on our theme, and at once places its author among those writers to whom this present § is devoted. Which same epistle is so remarkable that I will quote it (giving however the marginal Latin words instead of the occasional textual Greek ones) entire (except the last few lines which treat of an altogether different matter), in order that the reader may form his own opinion at leisure on its real scope and aim.

„Epistolae ego tuae prius-posterius respondebo, et quaestiunculam libabo quam proponis, sed breviter et cursim. Quid enim hîc vela pandam? hoc ipsum timide, quod pedem omnino pono in hanc cymbam. Quaeris, an sapienti fas aut jus consciscere sibi mortem? Olim id disputatum: nunc decusum. Et scis quid hac in re statuant religionis nostrae leges, quas improbe solitemus. Tamen vis aliquid pro veterum mente? distincte et breviter. Stoicis adhaeream; quibus autochiria placuit, sed non indefinite aut semper. Cum necessitas

¹⁾ Epistolarum selectarum centurii secunda miscellanea, op. XXII, Opera omnia, T. II, p. 147.

suprema ingruit, puta a tyranno aut alia vi violenta, nec mori tibi fas decore aut honeste: putant arbitrii nostri esse vitam nostram. Pauculos dies aut horas quidni praeveniam, non metu aut ignavia sed honesto illo fine? non, inquam, ut evadam, sed ut aliâ viâ vadam. Quid si morbus etiam urgeat difficilis, pertinax, et sine spe medicorum? videatur haud improbum, non diu jactari in hoc mari et transiri compendio ad portum. Idem in acerbitate temporum, et cum omnia miseriarum plena, sine spe allevationis. Atqui durare melius est, inquiunt alii: et hoc viri fortis. Non negamus, ubicumque breve aliquod malum est, et quod habere possit medicinam: ubi aliter, ô ignaviam mori toties, et non mori! *Rebus secundis servare* nos poeta jubet: sed non per adversa adversis. Ut in domo conducticia si habitem, nihil peccem si paulum exeam ante diem pensionis; ita hîc videtur, sed videtur: et nihil definitio (absit, absit) praeter definita piis sapientibusque viris. In *Thraseâ* nostro locum hunc magnifice tractavimus, et ut viro illo dignum, quem tamen premimus, quia nimis nos premant iudicia aut voces calumniosi aevi. An jam nunc non pecco, quod haec vana profero? sed apud te unum, et ex lege dictâ.“

Me the foregoing epistle strongly reminds of Shakspeare's version of Mark Antony's oration over the body of the dead Caesar, so soft and vague, so equivocal and evasive, yet not by any means unintelligible, despite its half-concealed purport. Mandarin's bob their heads to and fro; but, doubtless, the Chinese understand the tactics of such nodding! And the whole career of Lipsius, who was during a considerable portion of his life literally a *Jesuit*, is marked by much duplicity and ambiguity, contradiction and change as regards his moral and religious views.

As to the work „*Thrasea*“ to which Lipsius alludes in the above epistle, and which he refers to also in a marginal note to one of the most celebrated of his treatises¹⁾ with the words „*plura* hoc hujus rei in *Thrasea* nostro sive *de contemptu mortis*“, it is most certainly not contained in any edition of his works. Indeed, the index to vol. III of his opera omnia says: „*Thrasea, Dialogus de contemptu mortis, a Lipsio scriptus, sed ab ipso suppressus*“; and Föcher states²⁾ that „he had also a work on suicide under his hands,

¹⁾ De constantia, lib. II, c. 19, p. 595. ²⁾ Allgemeine Geschichte des Humanismus in voce Lipsius, at the conclusion, p. 2466.

to which he intended to give the title *Thraseas Pactus*, whereof, however, nothing has been published." At all events, since *Thraseas* was (vide Tacitus, Ann. XVI, 35) one of the most high-minded, deliberate and extolled among the Roman suicides of his day, and, I presume, a Stoic, I am inclined to suppose that the said work had probably for its object a sort of attempt at accommodating christian morals on the topic at issue to the ancient Stoic system.

The date affixed to the publication of Lipsius' *manuductio* is in the prefatory address 1604; but the epistle we have just quoted is one of the very few to which no *annuary* date whatsoever is attached, nor do I know anything about the person to whom it is addressed. (It stands between two epistles to which the dates 1588 and 1587 are respectively affixed). Therefore, I am unable to say, whether his censure of the Stoic doctrine preceded his defence of it, or vice versa. A certain measure of frivolous inconsistency in either case equally remains. Perhaps, the probability is in favor of the supposition that the epistle was subsequent to the treatise, more especially if his notes on Tacitus, which meritorious performance we referred to already in §. 35, be one of his latest publications (The edition I have used is also *without date*!). In one of these,¹⁾ namely, there occurs a *very suspicious* passage, to say the least of it. Tacitus has communicated the anti-suicidal speech of a certain Plotius Firmus, in which the words „majore animo tolerari adversa, quam relinqui“ occur, on which Lipsius annotates „Hæc illa sunt, quibus jugulare Stoicos nostros adversa omnis manus solet: pro quibus scutum habeo equidem quod opponam, nisi Religio me vetet.“ After having then quoted some classical Heathen testimonies which tell more or less against suicide, he ends by exclaiming very significantly: „Heu, taceo.“ — And we too will now be silent about this philosophical trickster who with so much apparent levity „turned about and wheeled about.“

IV. Donne († 1631).

Among the biographical performances of Izaak Walton, of angling immortality, his somewhat elaborate life of John Donne is generally considered the most perfect. Old Izaak, indeed, had been so intimate with Donne for many years that he was one of those few friends who attended him on his death-bed; and Donne, though now

¹⁾ Ad Hist. II, c. 46, p. 486.

pretty nearly forgotten, was in his day and age a literary and social notability. Here he, of course, concerns us only as the author of a work¹⁾ I have already (vide §. 11) alluded to, and we may therefore leave him alone as poet and preacher, using only such particulars of Walton's biography²⁾ as are in some measure interesting and elucidatory in immediate connexion with the composition and fate of the *Biathanatos*. My other sources of information shall be mentioned as we go along.

The youthful period of Donne's life would appear³⁾ not to have been free from irregularities; and the *Biathanatos* was a composition of his youth: whence, I presume, his own witty or humorous saying that it had been written by *Jack* Donne, not by Dr. Donne. Nor would it seem to me at all improbable that at this season his mind was somewhat harassed and excited by the many outward difficulties against which he had to contend, or by his inward struggles between the conflicting creeds of Catholicism, in which his relatives wished him to be brought up, and Protestantism, of which he himself ultimately made choice. At least, with the words „whensoever any affliction assails me, methinks I have the keys of my prison in mine own hand, and no remedy presents itself so soon to my heart, as mine own sword“ (Preface p. III), he evidently hints at his occasional temptation to suicide as one of his reasons for writing the *Biathanatos*.

Old Jöcher, D. D., evinces throughout his laboriously dry compilation such a pious dread of all books in defence of suicide that he generally manages to let their respective authors recant them either in their death-bed confessions or by their Wills, and thus he says (ubi supra in voce Donne) of the *Biathanatos*: „when the MS had got lost, the work had become extremely unpalatable (~~unpleasant~~) to the author, wherefore he in his Will had forbidden his heirs to have it printed, even if it should again be found.“ The evidence, however, which I have been able to gather does not exactly chime in with the said testimony. Donne, when about to proceed into

¹⁾ *Biathanatos*. A declaration of that Paradox or Thesis, that Self-Homicide is not so naturally Sin, that it may never be otherwise. Wherein, the nature and the extent of all those Laws, which seem to be violated by this Act, are diligently surveyed. Written by John Donne; who afterwards received orders from the Church of England, and died Dean of St. Paul's, London. ²⁾ Walton's *Lives*, edited by Zouch. Vide especially pp. 35, 36, 84—87. ³⁾ Cf. *Biographie Universelle*, T. XI, p. 561.

Germany, entrusted his friend, the Earl of Ankeram, with the MS, and penned an epistle to him in which the above quoted sportive expression about Jack Donne occurs, which, nevertheless, is accompanied by the following injunction: „reserve it for me, if I live, and if I die, I only forbid it the press and the fire: publish it not, but yet burn it not; and between these do what you will with it.“ Moreover, Walton expressly informs us that Donne was in the habit of showing the MS to his intimate friends, all of whom seem to have approved of its contents. And, indeed, Donne's author-abstinence in not publishing it proceeded, I feel strongly tempted to believe, far less, if at all, from any essential change which time had wrought in his opinions than rather from sheer prudential considerations; for, whereas we are nowhere assured that he ever harbored any serious misgivings about the tenability of the arguments or the godliness of the views therein advanced and advocated, a very moderate share of respect for conventionalism must surely have sufficed to impress him with the feeling and conviction that such a publication could not but be an inadvisable and unbecoming emanation from an Anglican Doctor of Theology and Dean of St. Paul's!

To John Donne, jun., D. C. L., the author's son, a man of wit and talents, but irreligious and dissolute, belongs the merit or demerit of sending the *Biathanatos* forth into the world as a *printed* book, whose sole reason for doing so was in all probability ¹⁾ a desire to recruit his exhausted funds by this means. The said gentleman himself, however, scorning the base imputation of a design to raise the wind by a bookseller's fees, assigns a more honorable and amiable motive. Vide his letter, as quoted in Zouch's Walton, and his dedicatory epistle to „the right honorable, the Lord, Phillip Herbert.“ By the by, I cannot, satisfactorily to myself, make out who this same Lord *Philip* can have been. The original MS is said to have been dedicated to the famous Lord *Edward* of Cherbury, the author of *de Veritate*, etc., who died anno 1648, and whose mother's funeral sermon Dr. Donne sen. had preached. He was, according to a memoir I have perused, ²⁾ succeeded by his son *Richard*, lord Herbert, who again was succeeded by his son *Edward*,

¹⁾ Vide Wood's *Fasti Oxonienses*, p. 503, and his *Athenae oxonienses*, vol. II, p. 504, and cf. also *ibid.* p. 503, note 4. ²⁾ Sequel to the Autobiography of Edward lord Cherbury, pp. 151, 152, and cf. p. 23.

lord Herbert, after whose death, anno 1691, the title was revived anno 1694 in Henry Herbert of Ribbesford. — But to proceed. Whoever the said Philip may have been, John Donne jun. who himself considered his late father's work „deserving to live for facilitating the issues of death“, presupposes a correspondent pro-suicide theory to belong to Mylord Philip.

According, now, to Wood's communications in his above cited catalogues raisonnés of Oxonians, to which, probably, the greatest authoritative weight is due, the first edition of the *Biathanatos* appeared 1644, and he states that the Oxford and Cambridge Libraries contain several (copies of) *original* editions. Hallam, on the contrary, assigns ¹⁾ 1651 as the date of its first appearance; and Morhof ²⁾ 1648, and 1664 as the date of the first re-print. I myself have had access only to two copies, both of which (one in the Royal Library of Munich, and one in the Liverpool Mechanics' Institute Library) bear the date 1700. If, however, Wood's statement be the correct one, which likewise Baumgarten adopts, ³⁾ the *Biathanatos* must have met with a very favorable reception from the public, so that not only a second edition of it was published 1648, but that when a certain Mr. Joseph Kannell of Lincoln College wanted to put forth a brief refutation of it, he was told by the bookseller that such a work was uncalled-for (nor has his, we must presume, well-meant zealous counter-dissertation, as far as I am aware, seen the light of print up to this day).

This matter of *chronological* difficulties being got over, we must say a few words on the *literary* criticisms which have been passed upon the characteristic peculiarities of the *Biathanatos*. Walton adjudged it to be „an exact and laborious treatise“, displaying most laudable judgment and learning, etc. But, honest Isaac was scarcely a great judge of such matters, and, as we have seen, one of the deceased author's most attached and partial friends. Equally favorable and flattering is Charles Blount's incidental notice of it in a work to which we shall have to revert by and by: ⁴⁾ „that excellent

¹⁾ Introduction to the Literature of Europe, vol. III, p. 125, note. ²⁾ Polyhistor, literarius, philosophicus et practicus, edit. 3, 1732, lib. VI, c. 4, §. 18, p. 994. ³⁾ Vide Niceron's Nachrichten von den Gelehrten und Schriftsteller berühmter Gelehrten, 1753, Th. VIII, pp. 164—177. ⁴⁾ The two first books of Philostratus, concerning the life of Apollonius Tyaneus: written originally in Greek, and now published in English: together with philological notes upon each chapter, 1680, pp. 154, 155.

treatise entitled *Biathanatos*, and written by that eminent Wit and Divine, Dr. Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's; wherein, *with no weak arguments*, he endeavours to justify out of Scripture, the Legality of Self-Homicide." But, as we narrated in §. 13, Blount himself died by his own hands, and was, probably, predisposed to any theoretical attempt at advocating the lawfulness of self-destruction. — All subsequent voices, as far as I am aware, are the very opposite of laudatory ones: they commenced with examination and refutation, and ended with ridicule and scoff. Morhof (*ubi supra*) adduces an anti-suicidal work of Sir William Denny's,¹⁾ published anno 1653, as having been called forth by the *Biathanatos*. Whether he had ever read it, I cannot say; but, having perused it myself, I must be allowed to affirm that it does not bear any internal marks of such a direct controversial aim. Probably, therefore, John Adams, D.D. and Provost of King's College, Cambridge, who is said to have been considered a very eloquent preacher in his time, was the first to whom, viz. anno 1700, the public is indebted for an elaborate attack upon the *Biathanatos*.²⁾ I sincerely regret that I did not take the trouble to read his pretty good-sized volume through, when I had (in the Manchester Town-Library) a copy of it in my hands; since I cannot now procure one. I have, however, perused a review or rather abstract of it which appeared anno 1701 in a Latin Leipzig periodical,³⁾ and which accords to it assent, and in so far bestows praise upon it. Moore (vol. I, pp. 83—103, and vol. II, pp. 1—41 of the work quoted in the Preface), as a matter of course, fights against it; but, I have merely glanced at the said hundred or so of quarto pages of strictures on the argumentative peculiarities of Donne's performance. Finally, the most recent writer, who has made mention of the *Biathanatos*, has inflicted upon it „the unkindest cut of all.“ Hallam (*ubi supra*) remarks. „It is a very dull and pedantic performance, without the ingenuity and acuteness of paradox; distinctions, objections, and quotations from the rabble of bad authors whom he used to read fill up the whole of it. It is impossible to find a less

¹⁾ Pellicanicidium or the Christian Adviser against Self-murder: together with a guide, and the pilgrim's pass to the land of the living. ²⁾ An Essay concerning Self-Murder. Wherein is endeavour'd to prove, that it is unlawful according to natural principles. With some considerations upon what is pretended from the said principles, by the Author of a treatise, intituled *Biathanatos*, and others. ³⁾ *Acta eruditorum*, Mensis Maji, pp. 282—288.

clear statement of argument on either side. No one would be induced to kill himself by reading such a book, unless he were threatened with another volume." However, this witticism, in and by itself good enough, would appear not to be *true*, if Morhof (l. c.) may be relied upon who expressly states that *not a few* (*haud pauci*) on perusing the said book (*ejus lectione*), found its arguments so convincing that they soon afterwards put them into practice by despatching themselves. Of course, Morhof means English people, among whom, as we shall see in the next §, a sort of melancholic suicidal penchant was taken for granted. His source of information on this point he has not mentioned.

V. Saint-Cyran († 1643).

When Justus Lipsius was Professor at the renowned university of Louvain, a certain Jean du Vergier (or Verger) de Hauranne studied there who, becoming subsequently made abbé de Saint-Siran (Cyran is a misspelling), has come to be known pretty universally under the appellation which he, in the manner of our anglican bishops, derived from his abbey. And that little French book of his, some account of which we will now give, is generally mentioned under the brief Latin title „*casus regius*“, though the veritable title under which it was published is French and somewhat more explicit,¹⁾ though singular enough to demand some explanation which I will give in full from Sainte-Beuve,²⁾ since it is both probable and amusing. „Il était lié avec le comte de Cramail, son compatriote du midi, bel-esprit d'alors et auteur de qualité. Or, le roi Henri IV ayant un jour demandé à quelques seigneurs, par manière de gai retour sur les anciennes détresses, ce qu'ils eussent fait si, perdant aussi bien la bataille d'Arques et obligé de se sauver sur mer, il eût été jeté loin par la tempête et dans une barque sans vivres, un d'eux répondit qu'il se serait plutôt tué, plutôt donné à manger à son roi que de le laisser mourir de faim. De là grand débat. Le roi posa la question: Si cela se pouvait faire sans crime. Ce fut à qui la résoudrait. Le comte de Cramail raconta le cas à M. de Hauranne, dont la vivacité subtile et l'imagination un peu bizarre

¹⁾ Question royale et sa Decision où est montré en quelle extrémité principalement en temps de paix le subiet pourroit estre obligé de conserver la vie du Prince aux despens de la sienne. A Paris, avec privilege du Roi, 1609. The copy I perused is in the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris. The author's name does not appear on the title-page; but it has been added in writing.
²⁾ Port-Royal, 1840, T. I, p. 290.

se mirent en frais de raisons à l'appui. Le comte en fut si charmé et les trouva si ingénieuses qu'il le pressa de les écrire. Il en résulta un petit livret" etc.

Already in §. 48, I quoted on Bayle's authority a certain Petrus a Sancto-Remualdo in connexion with the said booklet who, by the by, states that Saint-Cyran „*paulo ante obitum composuerat librum inscriptum Casus Regius*" etc. But, this statement is sufficiently disproved by the *date* affixed to the edition I have mentioned, and, I have reason to assume, that no other edition of it was ever printed. The *Casus Regius* must have been, on the contrary, a comparatively *juvenile* performance of our author's, since he was born anno 1581, and was consequently anno 1609 only twenty eight years of age. Altogether, the most absurd stories seem to have been circulated about the little book now under our consideration. Thus, for instance, we read in Bayle that Saint-Cyran, summoned to appear before the papal tribunal and answer for the opinions therein expressed, forthwith intimated that he knew of a means, viz. suicide, over which no Pope had power, and that he would rather kill himself than obey the summons of His Holiness. By the way the reader may, perhaps, remember that we are told (vide e. g. Cicero's T. Q., V, c. 4) of the Spartans that they, when Philip of Macedon threatened that he would prevent anything they might undertake, sarcastically interrogated by way of reply „num se esset etiam mori prohibiturus." Also another somewhat parallel statement about Saint-Cyran's cotemporary, the celebrated, and for the Catholics far too candid and liberal, catholic historian of the Council of Trent, Paolo Sarpi, may here find a place. When informed that his enemies and persecutors sought to get possession of his person, and had the most cruel punishments in store for him, he affirmed (we are told) that he knew of the means (viz. suicide) for escaping them, because there is no power which can constrain him to live who seriously wills to die. And in one of his letters the following sentiments are said to occur. „One must place one's self above the meshes of one's enemies. Whoso attaches too great a value to life, does not know how to live", etc. My authority for these communications concerning Fra Paolo is Buonafede (pp. 255, 256 of the work quoted in the Preface: the authorities he refers to are not within my reach). Sarpi was more than once attacked by assassins, *emissaries of the papal curia*! — this is certain; but I feel anything but certain that

he actually boasted of his suicidal resoluteness in case of need. However, be this as it may (the reader is requested to peruse the stupidly vile note on the matter by Bonafede's translators, pp. 431—437), the above quoted anecdote about Saint-Cyran, was, doubtless, a mere apocryphal tale, trumped up on the model of yon Spartan incident by his Jesuit enemies and antagonists.

At a subsequent period of his life, namely, our abbé became one of the founders, leaders, pillars, and ornaments of the so peculiar and influential school of the Jansenists, the Port-Royal des Champs, a distinguished Divine and a zealous Christian in the spirit and manner of that well-known *anti-Jesuitical* party in the French Catholic Church; and, therefore, we cannot wonder that the Jesuits in their various replies to the attacks made upon the principles of their body in the „Provinciales“ of Pascal should have in their turn made the „Question royale“ a butt for attack and abuse.

Thus much in general. However, the question has been broached, whether Saint-Cyran really meant to defend suicide in this same book, whether the book itself be a defence of suicide as such, and whether he himself was in jest or in earnest, when he penned it. „On a voulu inférer de cet ouvrage, que St. Cyran faisait l'apologie du Suicide. On ne peut nier qu'il ne s'y trouve des choses très singulières; mais il est évident qu'il n'avait intention que de prouver qu'il est des occasions, où l'on peut, et même où l'on doit sacrifier sa vie à de puissants intérêts.“ Thus the anonymous writer of the article on Saint-Cyran in the *Biographie Universelle* (T. 39, pp. 537—541) who, moreover, informs us that Saint-Cyran himself from the commencement combatted the „misinterpretation“, i. e. the pro-suicidal interpretation, of the import and drift of the little work now before us. Bayle and Jöcher (in their respective Dictionaries s. v. Saint-Cyran) affirm, on the contrary, that Saint-Cyran at the more advanced and matured period of his life would no longer own to the contents of this production of his youth, and even declared it not to have been at the time when he composed it an expression of his real sentiments, but to have been rather intended merely as a sort of metaphysical *jeu d'esprit*, which view of the matter is taken also by Saint-Beuve. On the fly-leaf of the copy I perused some unknown hand had inscribed the following only very vague critique. „Question traitée disertement et d'une manière très-intéressante, quoique le style en est vieille, et qu'en quelques endroits il soit d'une méta-

physique un peu entortillée." However, this critique, unsatisfactory though it be, has one advantage over aught Bayle, Jöcher or Saint-Beuve might have chosen to say, since, according to their own admissions, not one of them had ever read the book itself. Indeed, it seems strange to me that Bayle and Saint-Beuve should not have had the curiosity to peruse it; and still stranger that a very recent French writer, residing in Paris, should have ventured to assert that it in all probability does not exist any longer (I allude to an article, very declamatory and very shallow, which appeared on suicide in the *Journal des Débats* about a year ago; but I forget both the exact date and the author's name).

Voltaire, the most recent editors of Bayle in their notes on his article, and Bourquelot have given various extracts from Saint-Cyran's little book. Those of Voltaire I quoted in part for a specific argumentative object in §. 48: they stand principally on pp. 8, 9 of our work itself; the others, however, I shall not quote, since *detached passages* are at best but a poor proof, when the *entire* purport of an *entire* book is a controverted point. It is self-evident that Saint-Cyran's anti-Jansenist cotemporaries understood the *Question royale* to be decidedly an apology of suicide (vide the abstracts of their réponses to the Provinciales as given in the notes on Bayle); it is equally self-evident that the French Clergy of that age in general took great offence at it as at a publication which they considered a deliberate, ingenious, dangerous vindication of self-destruction (vide the publication of 1680 referred to by Saint-Beuve, which I have, however, not read); and, finally, it is also certain that up to far later times (vide Feller as quoted by the French translators of Buonafede) it has been viewed as a formal apology of suicide. Therefore, if Saint-Cyran had meant only to carry on a game at Don-Quixotism with his own acumen, and not to be serious at all, his mode of indulging in such a whim must have been singularly infelicitous and incautious. At least, surely, no intelligent person ever understood e. g. the present Archbishop of Dublin's „Historic doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte“ as a defence of Skepticism; and, though some silly persons could once misconstrue Johnson's „to die is the fate of man; but to die with lingering anguish is generally his folly“ into a recommendation of suicide, it was very easy for the sage moralist himself to show from the context that the said words were merely meant to warn against such intemperate and

sedentary habits as produce slow, but fatal, chronic diseases.¹⁾ By the by, whether Johnson ever wrote at any length about suicide, I do not remember; but, when discussing the case of Eustace Budgell,²⁾ he decidedly objects to self-destruction even for the purpose of escaping utter disgrace and expulsion from society, and suggests the delinquent's going abroad to some place where he is *not* known, instead of „going to the Devil where he is known.“

VI. Charles Gildon († 1723).

After Blount (vide §. 13) had destroyed himself, his friend Charles Gildon edited his posthumous works, and undertook, in a lengthy Preface thereto, to vindicate suicide in general, and Blount's suicide in particular, nay, hinted pretty strongly that, for his own person, he would endeavour to imitate Blount not only in the maintenance of his religious views, but, probably, also *in the mode of his death*.³⁾

This same suicide-vindictory Preface is in the form of an epistle which Gildon under the assumed name of „Lindamour“ addresses to the „honorable and divine Hermione“, whoever she may have been. The arguments he employs contain nothing either forcible or original, but his manner of dealing with the most usual arguments of the opponents to suicide is curt and, perhaps, even sometimes dexterous. Take, for instance, his remark on a simile well-known to us from what we have stated in chapt. I of Sect. I. „The soldier (at least in free countries) is not forced to that station *without* his consent, he knows before he lists himself the conditions of a soldier's life, and then submits himself to those conditions, a very substantial reason, why he should stay till relieved at his post.“ Indeed, we might almost sum them up in his own quotation of Almanzor's words to Boabdelin: „I myself am King of me.“ Nevertheless, Mendelssohn (vide §. 58) took the trouble to refute them, and even made them in part the basis upon which he erected the arguments of his own anti-suicidal epistles; and the writer of the

¹⁾ Vide Croker's Boswell, vol. VIII, pp. 135, 136 with the references to Morning Chronicle, May 29, 1782, and Gentleman's Magazine, Febr. 1786. Vide *ibid* vol. II, p. 252, note, the account given of a thorough misconception of the irony of Burke's Vindication of Natural Society, until the author himself subsequently explained his meaning. ²⁾ *Ibid*. vol. IV, p. 50, in Boswell's tour to the Hebrides. ³⁾ The miscellaneous works of Charles Blount, Esq. to which is prefixed the life of the author, and an account and vindication of his death, 1695.

article on Gildon in the *Biographie universelle* designates them as „une pompeuse apologie du suicide.“ I know not, whether they may be called high-flown; but I do know that they are not strong-pinioned. By the by, Gildon takes occasion to speak of his departed friend's soul as now in *Heaven*, and talks of his *sacred* monument.

Ten years later, however, viz. anno 1705, this voluminous writer appeared before the Public with a work¹⁾ which is in a most fulsome style dedicated to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, and which bore as motto the Ciceronian „humanum est errare sed bestiarum perseverare“, a work on account of which Crichton has included its author among the *Converts* from Infidelity (vide the first volume of his already quoted book), and which Leland calls²⁾ „a good book, in which the existence of God, Divine Providence, Immortality, Retribution are vindicated.“ Well, for my own part, I do not rate the said work so high; even if the design was honest, the execution is, at this time of day at all events, almost utterly unenjoyable. However, the commencement of the Preface thereto is as follows. „It is not to comply with the mode, that I trouble the Reader with this Preface, but to remove an opinion, I have formerly too much contributed to, by my defence of a Friend's death, for whom I had a particular value, not imagining it would have been of that ill consequence which I am afraid it was. I therefore thought myself obliged, not only to declare that I am perfectly convinced that Suicide is not lawful, but also to set down my reasons for this opinion, which I shall do by answering all those which I brought there for the contrary.“ Whereupon, after having given his own account of his previous pro-suicidal argumentation, he counter-argues in the beaten track, not omitting to lay all imaginable stress upon the Mosaic „thou shalt not kill.“

Thence, we need not be astonished at finding Charles Gildon dying *thirty one* years after his threat to the contrary had appeared in print as naturally and involuntarily as one who might have desired to live thirty one years longer; nor would we indulge in any pleasantry about this change of views and feelings which a decenary had wrought in him, but rather rejoice, supposing it to have

¹⁾ The Deist's Manual: or a rational enquiry into the Christian Religion. It is the Preface which mainly concerns us; compare, however, also pp. 210—236 of the work itself. ²⁾ Some account of the Deistical writers, vol. I, p. 61. —

been conscientious and sincere, that so beautiful a philosopher did not hesitate to own to it, thus making the reparation as complete and public as the injury had been.

Here, however, by way of appendix, a few further words about his suicidal friend Blount.

Ayscough (p. 8, note of the sermon mentioned already in §. 5) affirms that Blount wrote an „Essay on Self-murder“, and adds „he is generally said to have entertained a passion for his wife's sister, and when she refused to comply with his desire, to have stabbed himself.“ The more than equivocal, aye, extremely coarse, and in so far also untrue, character of the latter statement is self-evident (cf. the narrative we have given of Blount's death in §. 13). In general, we must always take cum grano salis English orthodox persons' accounts of the misdeeds or misfortunes of professed unbelievers; for they have a certain inward gratification in representing suchlike matters with darker colors than it is at all necessary to do, because they would fain draw inferences therefrom which reflect odium and horror upon infidelity and infidels as such. This is the Old Testament spirit and fashion of writing history, and a spirit and fashion to which we, doubtless, owe many of the invicious exaggerations and misrepresentations about the characters and lives of the early and mediæval schismatics and heretics. From suchlike historiography, however, the tender of conscience and heart will ever turn away in disgust. It would, methinks, have been wiser, if the Rev^d Dr. Ayscough had troubled himself to enquire, whether that law of our land which prohibited Blount from marrying his deceased wife's sister be so wise and salutary a one as to deserve being upheld and enforced! For my own part, I should have voted with Mr. Wortley for its abolition, and am very far from imagining that this or that interpretation of the Laws in Leviticus ought to settle the question, as even the Commissioners appointed to investigate the merits of Mr. Wortley's recent Bill seem to have supposed.¹⁾ — And as regards Ayscough's other statement, I cannot but feel inclined to deny that Blount ever did write any such Essay as is by our clergyman ascribed to him. Indeed, if we except Blount's incidental laudation of Donne's Biathanatos — vide ubi supra under Donne — there is no passage in any one of his works

¹⁾ Vide Quarterly Review, vol. LXXXV, pp. 157—182.

which could be construed into a theoretical approval, and much less into a systematic vindication, of suicide. Indeed, some passages in his posthumous Essays almost rather seem to imply the contrary.¹⁾ As to his praise of Donne's *Biathanatos*, which was called forth by a tale in Philostratos (lib. I, c. 23) in which the words occur „nay, if he be not a very coward, he will kill himself“, it certainly tells somewhat in the opposite direction; but surely so rambling, unmeaning and comparatively brief a note about suicide, consisting mainly in extracts from Donne, cannot be justly called an „Essay on Self-murder.“ By the by, these notes of his on Philostratos, vastly lengthy, frequently inappropriate, but often very ingenious, and not „philological“, but rather political, theological, metaphysical, ethical, gave such mighty offence to the Clergy that his book was anno 1698 condemned, nay, as Jacobs believes,²⁾ publicly burnt. Blount did not conceive Philostratos to have meant this book of his in ridicule of, or in reference to, Christ; but he himself derides and lashes, in his notes and preface, the Christian priesthood pretty much as he does the pagan.

VII. Robeck († 1735).

The man we have now to deal with was a character of a very different complexion from Gildon, a man of a singularly both internal and external *nomadic* life, so to speak. He had studied the question of suicide historically and philosophically with considerable industry and care, had never announced to the world that he intended to prove the sincerity of the pro-suicidal convictions he had arrived at by practice, nay, apparently took even some pains to leave the world in a sort of uncertainty about the manner of his exit out of it which, however, was evidently most deliberately voluntary, as we shall presently learn.

Johannes Robeck, born of respectable parents at Calmar in southern Sweden, studied with considerable zeal and success at the university of Upsala. Then and there already he would appear to have imbibed from his favorite book, the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, more or less the Stoic views on the topic of suicide and other cognate subjects, and to have given himself some trouble to

¹⁾ Vide e. g. the Preface to his „*Great is Diana of Ephesus*“, and p. 54 of his essay „*Anima mundi*“. ²⁾ *Worte des alten Philostratos*, B. II, *Einleitung*, p. 162.

promulgate his opinions on suchlike matters by lessons or lectures. But, the Swedish government, like Ptolemy of old, was anxious and determined to put, if not a stop to, yet at least some check upon, the ethical vagaries of this enthusiastic young modern Hegesias. Robeck, however, would seem not to have appreciated its interference, howsoever justifiable it may have been, and quitted his native land for ever, probably under the impression that „*nemo propheta in patria*.“ Henceforward, his life became as unsettled as his mind was, according to all appearances, unhinged. His remaining years he spent chiefly in Germany, was, though originally as Swede of course a Lutheran, received at Hildesheim anno 1705 into the order of the Jesuits who treated him with great distinction and employed him on missions of trust, with whom he, nevertheless, somehow became disappointed and disgusted, whereupon he anno 1734, then already considerably advanced in years, solicited by letter matriculation at the (then) university of Rinteln where, his request having been forthwith acceded to by the rector magnificus, Johannes Nicolaus Funck, a writer of considerable versatility and reputation,¹⁾ who was destined to become inseparably bound up with Robeck's subsequent literary notoriety, he led a most studious and retired life for upwards of a year, after which period he suddenly left the town.

Namely, at the commencement of the month of May, 1735, Funck received a Latin epistle from Robeck in which the latter informed him that he wished to entrust him with a chest of books and MSS and about 100 florins (circa L. 9), since he purposed to proceed on a journey; and in that epistle the following strange and suspicious passage occurred.²⁾ „*Brevi discedam, ultimamque, opinor, peregrinationem instituem, atque ut omni fere priore vita, ita ejus jam ad LXIV. paene annum protractae fine implebo pressiore sensu communem humanae conditionis sortem.*“ — On the 17th of the following month, he again addressed a letter to Prof. Funck from Bremen, transmitting to him a trunk with a little money and some few other articles, and instructing him how he wished them to be disposed of in case he himself should not return.

¹⁾ Vide Strieder's *Grundlage zu einer Heffischen Gelehrten- und Schriftsteller-Geschichte*, 1784, B. IV, pp. 256—284. Funck † 1777, at a very advanced age. ²⁾ *Praeliminaris de morte voluntaria dissert.* p. VI.

A few days later, now, intelligence reached M. Funck from Bremen to the effect that Robeck, having put on his most decent wearing-apparel and hired a small boat, had placed himself quite alone in it, pushed off from the shore, committed it to the current, and — been found, a corpse, three days afterwards in the river Weser, about 15 miles seaward from the city. We, therefore, cannot but take for granted that Robeck had voluntarily launched his spirit into Eternity, leaving the stream to float his body whither-soever it might list.

I have brought this „strange, eventful story“ into as small a compass as I could, the basis of which is formed by Funck's narrative (prefixed to the first of the two books we shall presently have occasion to mention) which is the source from which all later biographical sketches have been drawn. Perhaps, the reader may experience some little difficulty in believing all this to have taken place just as I have recounted it; but — *relata refero*: I have not consciously added aught of my own inventing or surmising.

Well, but to pass on from the fate of the man to the nature of his book or, rather, books.

He had, it would appear, bequeathed in the above mentioned chest to the charge of Prof. Funck no fewer than seven MSS, especially urging upon him the publication of such of them as he should think most eligible; and, as I divine, it was the peculiar mode of the author's death which in some measure induced his literary executor to make the commencement with what appeared — at Rinteln anno 1736 already — under the title given at the foot of the page.¹⁾ It is in small quarto, and fills 319 pages without the nearly 60 pages of Funck's own apparatus.

Nevertheless, even with this Herculean performance which turns chiefly upon a demonstration of the lawfulness of self-destruction according to Stoic principles and antagonism to the counter-arguments of the Platonists, the matter was not yet exhausted; for, seventeen years later, viz. anno 1753, Funck edited another²⁾ of

¹⁾ Exercitatio philosophica de εὐλόγῳ ἑξαγωγῇ sive morte voluntaria philosophorum et bonorum virorum, etiam Judaeorum et Christianorum. Recensuit, perpetuis animadversionibus notavit, praefatus est et indicem rerum locupletissimum addidit J. N. Funccius. ²⁾ De morte voluntaria s. examen calumniarum, nugarum et fallaciarum, quibus tanquam argumentis utuntur, εὐλογου ἑξαγωγῆς, consensus generis humani, salutis et gloriae bonorum virorum, honestarumque feminarum hostes et oppugnatores. Perpetuis animadversionibus notavit, praefatus est et indicem rerum addidit J. N. Funccius.

Robeck's manuscripts under the on p. 189 specified title. This is a vindication of the drift and results of the former work from Holy Writ, directed more especially against some of the churchfathers, and again takes up 384 quarto pages, besides a preface of Funck's which extends ever 36 more. — The only copy of the latter of these two publications I have fallen in with was in the Royal Library at Munich, and a considerable time ago; a copy of the former one in the Stuttgart Library now lies before me.

It lay in the nature of the case that such publications cannot have escaped the notice of those interested in the phenomena of literature, and thence various voices have been raised on their merits and demerits. To be silent on Funck himself who did what he could in a very mild spirit and patient manner by preliminary discourses and frequent annotations to refute the errors and paralyze the influence of his author, I will now draw attention to some few other more or less notable verdicts which have become known to me. Formey (pp. 194—197 of the dissert. quoted in §. 3). „La latinité de cet ouvrage est belle, et l'érudition, quelque copieuse, y est agréablement ménagée. L'Auteur bâtit perpétuellement sur les Principes des Stoïciens, et donne par conséquent dans plusieurs de leurs Sophismes. Mais à tout prendre, ce Traité est curieux.“ He then enumerates seven of the pro-suicidal reasons as the principal ones, propounded with all the force of which they are susceptible, and tries to refute or invalidate them in his own fashion. — Rousseau (as quoted in §. 21) lets Saint Preux allude to Robeck's Dissertation, and say that he does not particularly agree with its arguments, and he himself then adds in a note; „Robeck délibère si posément qu'il est la patience de faire un livre, un gros livre, bien long, bien pesant, bien froid, et quand il eût établi, selon lui, qu'il étoit permis de se donner la mort, il se la donna avec la même tranquillité.“ — An anonymous writer in a once famous organ of literature, after having given a very elaborate analysis of the entire work, thus sweepingly denounces it.¹⁾ „D'ailleurs il parle toujours en vrai Déclamateur, pressant même la Déclamation jusqu'à une espèce d'enthousiasme très puérile, et très ridicule. On ne peut terminer plus pitoyablement une Dissertation très mauvaise, et

¹⁾ Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savants de l'Europe, T. XVII, seconde partie, pp. 446, 465.

très faible en son tout.“ — The author of the article on Robespierre in the *Biographie Universelle* (T. 38, p. 181) indulges in the following brief sarcasm: „on retrouve, dans cette Dissertation, le désordre qui régnait dans la tête de l'auteur; et il n'est pas probable que cet écrit engage jamais personne à suivre son exemple.“ Finally (thus various are ever, as the passions, so the judgments of men opposite to any out-of-the way literary production), an anonymous German critic,¹⁾ when noticing the second work only, from which he makes some few brief extracts, inclines to think that the fame of ability (*Gefähigkeit*) cannot be denied to its author, but that he, in consequence of the badness of his cause, has found himself compelled to help himself by perversions (*Verbrehungen*) and to make up by words for the want of reasons, and has not been sparing of even bitter and coarse expressions.

VIII. Passeran († 1737).

Albert Radicati, comte de Passeran et de Cocconas, generally, however, called by those who have written about him simply Passeran or Passerani, by birth a Piedmontese, has prefixed an autobiographical sketch to his last production²⁾ which was published at Rotterdam a year before his death. Therein he informs us that a christian monarch whose rights he had defended against the encroachments of the priesthood, had confiscated his estates, and that the holy catholic church of which he had been a member, had condemned him to be burnt alive. And, inasmuch as the said account which he gives of himself and his affairs has never, to my knowledge at least, been contradicted, we are in a manner bound to receive it as truth; and, if true it be, we may at all events, if not exactly forgive, yet somewhat easily comprehend that infidelity and acrimony which breathe in and out of the work I have just mentioned, which work, though it is not the one in which his defence of suicide is to be found, nevertheless concerns us somewhat in regard to the matter before us, inasmuch as sundry writers assure us that Passeran on his death-bed revoked his infidel principles, and, more especially, repented of his vindication and justification of suicide.

Jöcher (*ubi supra* s. v. de Passeran) says: „before his end, he revoked all the writings which he had composed against the

¹⁾ *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, Jahrgang 1754, B. I, pp. 163—166. ²⁾ *Recueil de pièces curieuses sur les matières les plus intéressantes.*

truth of the christian religion;" but he does not include the book about which we shall have to speak more particularly, in his catalogue of Passeran's publications; but the drily industrious Bremen Lutheran clergyman, Rotermund, made good this defect in his continuation of Adelung's supplement to Jöcher, without, however, giving the complete title of the book we are about to report of. Also the author of the article on Passeran in the *Biographie universelle* makes mention of the said revocation, though he lets the matter rest upon an „on prétend.“ Henke, however, refers¹⁾ his readers to a Dutch work by some M. Rütz (*Kleine Bydraegen tot de deistische Letterkunde*, i. e. brief contributions on Deistical literature, Stuck I, 1781) which is said — for I have not seen it — to communicate, and comment on, the death-bed conversion of our Italian Nobleman.

Nevertheless, when I take into consideration that *only a year before his death* in the just mentioned *Recueil* which I have carefully read, Passeran sarcastically, impetuously, with unmistakable perspicacity and frivolous pleasantry, placed Muhammad morally higher than Moses and pronounced Lycurg *mentally* superior to Jesus, palpably, by the by, confounding the Jewish legislator with Monarchy and the Founder of Christianity with Papacy, I may, perhaps, be pardoned for indulging in some little skepticism touching the statement that, on his death-bed, he vowed that he himself had never even believed aught of what he had sent forth into the world as his creed. Nay, even if the fact of such a confession were established, to me at least the sincerity of the confession would still remain a somewhat doubtful matter.

The title of the *Essay*²⁾ which has placed Passerani in the van of modern defenders of suicide, does not by any means herald its import and tendency. Written originally in Italian, it was done into English by a certain Joseph Morgan, and printed in London; but the author, who had spent a considerable portion of his life in England, the translator and the publisher are recorded to have been prosecuted and imprisoned for their respective pains: a circumstance which is all the more remarkable, because Passerani is said (*vide*

¹⁾ *Kirchengeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Th. II, pp. 88—90 of edit. 2, 1825. ²⁾ A philosophical dissertation upon death, composed for the consolation of the unhappy, by a friend of the truth, 1732.

the *Biographie universelle*, T. 33, pp. 96—98) to have undertaken therein to justify suicide „pour faire plaisir aux Anglais.“ He, however, after having given security for future good behaviour, was soon set at liberty, repaired to Holland, where he continued to write, as we have seen, in a similar spirit, and where he also died.

For this same publication, now, I hunted in vain through the confused catalogues of even the British Museum Library, nor have I been able to meet with it in any other public book-collection to which I have had access. Therefore, I must confine myself to learning from other books what result Passerani has arrived at on the topic of our enquiry, and what line of argument he has pursued. Henke (ubi supra, p. 90). „Seine Aufsätze waren weniger verführerisch, als empörend. In dem einen rechtfertigte er den Selbstmord, mit Verwerfung alles Glaubens an Gott, als ein von der Welt unterschiedenes Wesen, alles Unterschiedes und aller Verantwortlichkeit menschlicher Handlungen.“ Essentially the same verdict the writer in the *Biographie universelle* (ubi supra) utters. „Il met en avant le matérialisme, soutient que la mort n'est autre chose que la décomposition de la matière et son changement de forme; qu'ayant reçu la vie pour être heureux, nous sommes libres de la rendre lorsqu'elle n'atteint pas ce but; que les peines et les récompenses éternelles ne sont que des inventions de la crédulité; et que toutes les actions étant nécessaires, il n'y a point de bien et de mal moral.“ — Be this little enough about what, even if I knew more, would, according to what we thus learn, scarcely deserve being longer dwelt on.

IX. Montesquieu († 1755).

This world-wide literary celebrity has adverted to our topic in almost every one of his writings; it is, however, with the opinions expressed in a juvenile performance¹⁾ of his which we shall now have chiefly to deal, since they more especially have procured for him a prominent rank among the advocates of suicide.

Whoso desires a complete idea of the exact sequence of pro-suicidal argumentation in Usbek's not very lengthy epistle, must peruse it for himself. Here only some few of such leading sentences and points as reveal and embody the drift and pith of his philosophy on our subject shall be extracted. — The following question is, of course, not an argument exactly, but the reply tacitly

¹⁾ *Lettres Persanes*, lettres LXXVI and LXXVII in the edit. 1777.

implied is evidently that it would be *emot* to offer hindrance. „Quand je suis accablé de douleur, de misère, de mépris, pourquoi veut-on m'empêcher de mettre fin à mes peines, et me priver cruellement d'un remède qui est en mes mains?“ In the following emphatic twofold assertion, any claims which God might be affirmed to have as *Creator* or *Lord* are entirely lost sight of, and Society is conceived as simply and solely a visible, *human* fabric. „La société est fondée sur un avantage mutuel: mais lorsqu'elle me devient onéreuse, qui m'empêche d'y renoncer? La vie m'a été donnée comme une faveur; je puis donc la rendre lorsqu'elle ne l'est plus: la cause cesse; l'effet doit donc cesser aussi.“ Most startling, however, is the following simile in which the wilful striking off of a spiritual force from the stage appointed for its operations is identified with the mere converting of a spherical body into a quadrato one. „Tronblai-je l'ordre de la Providence, lorsque je change les modifications de la matière, et que je rends quarrée une boule que les premières lois du mouvement, c'est-à-dire, les lois de la création et de la conservation, avoient fait ronde?“ Finally, we are bid to believe that it is only our „pride“ which magnifies our „littleness“ into a subject for God's concernment in a future world, or a cause of disarranging interference with the established order of things, and are bid to take for granted that though man as merely „un atome subtil et délié, que Dieu n'apperçoit qu'à cause de l'immensité de ses connoissances“ should destroy himself, Omniscience and Omnipotence will ultimately at all events know how to joint him again into this World-Order, and thus benevolently set all right again. — Such is the main contents of Usbek's epistle to Ibben, and we will not deny the acuteness and vigor of reasoning therein displayed.

Ibben, however, replies, and his reply is set forth as a refutation of Usbek's apology for suicide. But, in the first place, the reply is shorter by at least two thirds; and, in the second place, the whole commences with an „il me semble“, the first argument is in the form of a mere question, and the two others commence respectively with a „si.“ Indeed, as far as the refutation may be said to be really argumentative, its tenor is, perhaps, rather Mahammadan¹⁾ than Christian.

¹⁾ Which casual hint may prove more or less significant.

Nevertheless, Moore (vol. II, p. 86 of the work quoted in the Preface) says: „the reply of Ibben is concise, pertinent, and solid“ „which (viz. the said reply) we are to suppose discloses the sentiments of Montesquieu himself.“

What I myself think about the first part of this verdict, I have already implicitly stated; but, in an even still greater degree do I dissent from the second portion of Moore's statement. Let us look at these same lettres Persannes a little more closely in general. They were intended, as the reader no doubt already knows, as an exposé of and an attack upon what appeared to their author, who chose the disguise of an *outlandish* traveller and observer, the then social abuses and ecclesiastical extravagances in Europe, more especially, however, in France. It was on Montesquieu's part a more or less original and felicitous hit, and his many imitators can, I presume, scarcely be said to have attained to his excellence or fame in this particular kind of composition. Usbek, now, is the proper hero and the chief correspondent in this same didactico-satirical novel. He is a Persian who, gladly leaving the Court and his Harem for a season behind, and the Mollahs and their Koranic orthodoxy into the bargain, makes a tour into the Occident in search of knowledge, or rather for the gratification of his curiosity, and takes up his residence for more than half a dozen years at Paris, so that French institutions, habitudes, occurrences become the chief topics of his descriptions and criticisms. And Montesquieu manifestly represents this same Usbek as a Deist (vide e. g. lettre 35), much in the style of Montesquieu himself, nor does it require much acumen to discover that our author lets him above all the other correspondents in the book (vide e. g. more especially lettres 48, 81, 82) utter his own, Montesquieu's, tenets, doubts, censures on law, religion, abuses, fashions, the *duel* — and why not, therefore, also on suicide? And, whencesoever, but this is rarely the case, the various correspondents become controversial, Usbek is invariably (vide e. g. lettres 99—108) made, as the bearer of the boldest and most original dogmatical and political tenets and opinions, so the preeminently suggestive reasoner and victorious combatant. Additionally, however, one point. I have had the edition of 1790 (the work was first published anno 1721) before me, when making the references given parenthetically in the previous few lines, and in this edition Ibben's reply *does not stand at all*, and Usbek's letter bears

the number 64, not 76. Whence we infer that Ibben's reply was an after-thought, an addition inserted, perchance, to ward off the attacks which the Ecclesiastics of the time had made upon the tenor and tone of Usbek's letter. Nay, I have read even that some Jesuits and others piously assert¹⁾ that Montesquieu on his death-bed denounced this very letter of Usbek's to Ibben, and this very assertion implies that Montesquieu identified himself with Usbek, and consequently, himself admitted that he had in the said letter once penned on his own responsibility a decided and an emphatic vindication of suicide, and, we will frankly avow, a vindication which in nuce contains pretty much all the reasons, whether straight or crooked, conclusive or impotent, which other later pro-suicidal reasoners have employed and expanded. By the by, however, though it is true that the Jesuits did beleaguer the dying President not a little, and though it is very likely that they endeavored to persuade him to recant and condemn the import of Usbek's letter, it is certain that Montesquieu treated those same spiritual intruders with contempt, and, what is more directly to our purpose, that one of his own last expressions bears a very strong resemblance to a passage in this identical Usbekish epistle.

Anno 1748, i. e. 27 years later than the first edition of *les lettres Persannes*, Montesquieu published his *esprit des lois*, and in one of his notes thereto²⁾ we read: „L'action de ceux qui se tuent eux-mêmes, est contraire à la loi naturelle et à la religion révélée.“ Which same note certainly at first sight appears most anti-suicidal; nor is it impossible that Montesquieu had really changed his opinions on our topic after the lapse of 27 years. However, I individually strongly suspect that this brief annotation itself must be viewed rather as a mere *historical* notice than as the deliberate verdict of a *moralist*; at least, other christian Jurisconsults, e. g. Mackenzie and Blackstone, when they, in more or less similar works, wished to condemn suicide from the standing-point of christian ethics, speak at far greater length and with unmistakeable individual earnestness on the matter. And I the more incline to believe that Montesquieu's opinions on our theme had not really undergone any essential change, since sundry³⁾ passages of another work of his, published 1734,

¹⁾ Vide T. XXIX. pp. 519, 520 of the *Biographie Universelle*. ²⁾ Liv. XIV, ch. 12. ³⁾ *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*, ch. XII near the end.

in which he undisguisedly offers his own views, appear to me to imply a certain amount of sympathy with suicide, nay, approval and admiration of it, if they do not embody a direct advocacy. Having blamed the over-haste with which Brutus and Cassius had slain themselves, thereby in a manner causing that tragedy at the conclusion of which Cato slew himself, he passes on to assign sundry reasons which rendered suicide so frequent among the then Romans and induced them to consider it heroic, and says inter alia what follows. „Une espece de point d'honneur, peut-être plus raisonnable que celui qui nous porte aujourd'hui à égorger notre ami pour un geste ou pour une parole.“ „L'amour-propre, l'amour de notre conservation se transforme en tant de manieres, et agit par des principes si contraires, qu'il nous porte à sacrifier notre être pour l'amour de notre être: et tel est le cas que nous faisons de nous-mêmes, que nous consentons à cesser de vivre par un instinct naturel et obscur qui fait que nous nous aimons plus que notre vie même.“ „Il est certain que les hommes sont devenus moins libres, moins courageux, moins portés aux grandes entreprises qu'ils n'étoient lorsque, par cette puissance qu'on prenoit sur soi-même, on pouvoit à tous les instans échapper à toute autre puissance.“ „Si Charles I, si Jacques II avoient vécu dans une Religion qui leur eût permis de se tuer, ils n'auroient pas eu à soutenir, l'un une telle mort, l'autre une telle vie.“

X. Hume († 1776).

I am perfectly well aware that, except among some few enquirers into curious matters, the interest of the British public in the Essay we shall report of, has long since died away, and that its author is now remembered only as the historian of England and the antagonist to Miracles. But, we dare not forget that it, nevertheless, created a considerable degree of sensation at the time of its appearance, and for some decennaries longer, since it had flowed out of the pen of a writer whose name had deservedly a mighty sound for acuteness and clearness of intellect, whose private character was unspotted and amiable beyond suspicion, and whose philosophy was mainly characterized by its aiming at practical ethical influence and authority in common life.

The at the foot of the next page mentioned small volume is the only copy — I fell in with it in the Göttingen University Library — of Hume's pro-suicidal monograph (it is only 22 pages long) I myself

have ever seen.¹⁾ The name of the „editor“ I have not been able to discover; but, whoever he may have been, his „Remarks“ are not very likely, either as products of reflection or as results of research, to benefit anybody who thinks closely and deeply and knows anything about the subject; indeed, at all times and on any subject a stiff and defective counter-composition is calculated in the long run to do more harm than good, though it may win momentary favor from the many; and he most certainly displayed (vide §. 21) somewhat questionable discretion, when he, for an anti-suicidal purpose, tacked on to his publication the epistles of Rousseau.

When this same edition was given to the public, Hume had been dead already *seven* years; nevertheless, we have ample reasons for knowing that the said two Essays were not *posthumous* works. Stäudlin, writing anno 1794, says what follows in a note to one of his elaborate historico-critical publications. „These Essays have never appeared under Hume's name, nor are they to be found in any edition of his works. They were, however, immediately on their first appearance ascribed to him, and he never contradicted the statement that he was the author of them, although he has as much as rejected them by never incorporating them with his works. For a long time they were very rare, circulated among few persons only, like a prohibited book, and were purchased at high price. Some years ago, they were reprinted under the title: *Essays on suicide and the immortality of the soul, by the late David Hume; with remarks by the editor. To which are added two letters on suicide from Rousseau's Eloisa. A new edition with considerable improvements. London, 1789.*“ I have quoted this note in full because of certain difficulties which will immediately appear, inasmuch as the edition which Stäudlin on this occasion used is more recent by half a dozen years than the one to which I have had access, and to which we will now return.

„Never before published“: thus the anonymous editor of the year 1783. But, this is palpably a misstatement, whether wilfully

¹⁾ *Essays on Suicide and the immortality of the Soul, ascribed to the late David Hume, never before published. With remarks intended as an antidote to the poison contained in these Performances, by the Editor. To which are added two letters on Suicide, from Rousseau's Eloisa, 1783.* ²⁾ *Geistliche und Geist des Skepticismus, vorzüglich in Rücksicht auf Moral und Religion, B. II, pp. 197, 198.*

or from ignorance. — According to Hume's most recent and very scrupulous, though, perhaps, somewhat partial, biographer,¹⁾ Hume would appear to have composed this Essay on Suicide some twenty years before his death, is said, however, to have wished to suppress it, but to have found himself unable to succeed in destroying it — Also this desire for suppressing it has been differently accounted for by different writers. Barton ascribes it to a sort of amiable repentance at the eleventh hour; Stäudlin (p. 154—161 of the work mentioned in the Preface) affirms that Hume never meant to publish it, lest he might encrease among the English an evil which was already but too prevalent; the writer in Rose's New Biographical Dictionary (s. v. Hume, p. 407) represents such desire for the suppression of it as the effect of threats of persecution made to the book-seller; and, finally, Henke (ubi supra, p. 112) suggests that Hume himself deemed our essay shallow and unworthy of himself, and, therefore, did not wish it to be perpetuated.

I will not pretend to decide on this matter, since I cannot presume to know the motives of a person who would appear not to have expressed them himself in any distinct or ascertainable manner.

At all events, two facts seem to be beyond doubt. Firstly, the essay on suicide had been printed and circulated not only before 1783, but even some time before Hume's death; at least, the writer of the article on Holbach in the *Biographie Universelle* (T. XX, p. 464; vide, however, a singularly divergent statement in the same work s. v. Hume, p. 51) informs us that Holbach's translation of it in his „*Recueil philosophique, ou Mélanges de pièces sur la religion et la morale*“ appeared already anno 1770, i. e. six years before Hume's death. And, secondly, the authenticity has been now so far established that the two Essays under debate have been included in the *last* edition of Hume's Miscellaneous Works (as Burton assures us; for this edition I have not had in my own hands).

After these details about chronology and authenticity, we proceed to record some few opinions on the literary value and ethical spirit of the vindication of suicide under mention.

Cowper, writing to W. Unwin in July 1784, already mentions²⁾

¹⁾ Life and Correspondence of David Hume, 1846, vol. II, pp. 13—16.

²⁾ Works, vol. II, p. 282. The condemnatory notice of it in an English „Review“ of that period to which Cowper alludes, I have not had an opportunity of perusing.

this essay on suicide as being in self-understood fashion the production of „that Pope of thousands, as blind and presumptuous as himself.“ Considering the entire performance palpable sophistry, inconceivable in a shrewd and sensible man, except on the principle that God infatuates those who will not see, he takes hold of a special simile in it which he disposes of in the following manner. „His silly assertion, that, because it would be no sin to divert the course of the Danube, therefore it is none to let out a few ounces of blood from an artery, would justify not suicide only, but homicide also. For the lives of ten thousand men are of less consequence to their country than the course of that river to the regions through which it flows. Population would soon make society amends for the loss of her ten thousand members, but the loss of the Danube would be felt by all the millions that dwell upon its banks, to all generations. But the life of a man and the water of a river can never come into competition with each other in point of value, unless in the estimation of an unprincipled philosopher.“

Similarly Sailer (pp. 96—100 and 110 of the work quoted in §. 67) turns some of Hume's pro-suicidal analogies or comparisons into contemptuous ridicule.

An anonymous German critic, writing also in the year 1784 whilst merely assuming Hume to have been the author, judges in general „that he, at least, had not composed our essay in his most favorable skeptical hours“, asserts that the best of the reasons therein cannot prove anything, because they would prove *too much*, finds some of the similes and parallels utterly objectionable, and declares some of the arguments extremely superficial and shallow, or — unwarrantably bold.

Stäudlin (ubi supra in his *Geist und Geschichte des Skepticismus*). „Both Essays are really not worthy of Hume: they contain *very* shallow observations, and are written in an impassioned tone which was otherwise quite foreign to our philosopher.“ And in another part of the same work (pp. 215—222), after having recorded by a very circumstantial analysis in what manner Hume endeavors to demonstrate that suicide is a transgression of our duties neither towards God, nor others, nor ourselves, he winds up his discussion by the

¹⁾ Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen, B. III, Stüd 210, Dec. 31, pp. 2100—2102.

following mournfully ironical exclamation on Hume's consistency: „So weit kommt man, wenn man die Moral physischen Gesetzen unterwirft, und in ihr von Naturtrieben ausgeht.“

Burton, on the contrary, expresses (*ubi supra*) the opinion that Hume's utilitarian principles ought to have suggested to him the propriety and necessity of looking not only at the person who perpetrates the act, but also at the misery caused to the surviving relatives, and at the injury done to the stability of society; and, whilst marvelling at the calm and cold manner in which our modern stoic has treated his painful theme, argues from this very manner the unimpressiveness of the production itself.

Ere, however, we quit this Essay, a couple of anecdotes in connexion with it may here find a place. — Dr. Johnson (*vide Boswell*, vol. IX, p. 137), when assigning his reasons for his inveterate hatred to Hume, states in his wonted emphatic manner that our philosopher had endeavored to persuade a friend of his, who had the stone, to shoot himself. — We must believe honest Samuel on his word in this matter, no doubt; but, the following communication of Winslow's,¹⁾ without name, date, or authority, I cannot but consider of a somewhat questionable character. „It has been asserted, and remains uncontradicted, that Hume lent his Essay on Suicide to a friend who, on returning it, told him that it was a most excellent performance, and pleased him better than anything he had read for a long time. In order to give Hume a practical exhibition of the effect of his defence of suicide, his friend shot himself the day after returning him his Essay. If — thus Dr. W. further delivers himself —, in any one instance, suicide might admit of something like an apology, it would have been in this — if the detestable author of this abominable treatise had, on receiving the melancholy intelligence, committed it to the flames, and terminated his own pernicious existence by a cord. But, the cold-blooded infidel was too cowardly to execute summary justice on himself. With a truly diabolical spirit, his delight was to scatter firebrands among the people, and sing „am I not in sport?“ — But, my good Sir, you are a physician, not a Methodist parson: wherefore, then, though we sympathize with your virtuous and manly indignation, supposing the tale to be true, such a coarse tone, such Boanerges rant? More christian in spirit

¹⁾ Anatomy of suicide, p. 32.

as well as more gentlemanly in form is, methinks, that simple exclamation in the already quoted Annotations on Young's Night Thought (edit. 1804, p. 354): „how horrid it is that one of our first writers for literary genius, should have been the advocate of this crime (suicide) — I mean the elegant, but sceptic, Hume.“ — Aye, horrid, no doubt, it is and remains. — — — If we examine into Hume's other writings, only in one of them is there anything that might strike us as indicating an approval of, or at all events a lax and indifferent opinion about, suicide. I allude to sundry passages ¹⁾ in the „Dialogue“ which he has appended to his „Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals“, which same Dialogue turns upon a parallel between the ancient Athenians and the modern French, and which passages have certainly left the impression on my own mind that Hume meant to embody therein anything but a horror of suicide even from the standing-point of Christianity. However, I will extract two or three of the said passages, and then leave the reader to judge of their drift for himself. „I have lately received a letter from a correspondent in Fourli, by which I learn that since my departure Alcheic, falling into a bad state of health, has fairly hanged himself; and has died universally regretted and applauded in that country. So virtuous and noble a life, says each Fourlian, could not be better crowned than by so noble an end; and Alcheic has proved by this, as well as by all other actions, what was his constant principle during his life, and what he boasted of near his last moments, that a wise man is scarce inferior to the great god, Vitzi. This is the name of the supreme deity among the Fourlians“ — „But though so ready to draw their sword against their friends and countrymen, no disgrace, no infamy, no pain, no poverty will ever engage these people to turn the point of it against their own breast. A man of rank would row in the galleys, would beg his bread, would languish in prison, would suffer any tortures; and still preserve his wretched life. Rather than escape his enemies by a generous contempt of death, he would infamously receive the same death from his enemies, aggravated by their triumphant insults, and by the most exquisite sufferings.“ — „Have the gods forbid self-murder? An Athenian allows that it ought to be forborn. Has the Deity permitted it? A Frenchman allows, that death is preferable to pain and infamy.“

¹⁾ Essays and treatises, 1760, vol. IV, pp. 227, 234, 240, and cf. p. 231.

XL. Holbach († 1798).

Perhaps, I ought in this instance rather to have contented myself with giving merely the title of the work upon which we are now about to enter, since, as in the famous Junius-letters' case, the veritable authorship is a somewhat disputed matter. Diderot, Helvetius, d'Alembert, the Marquis de Chatalux, Mustrel, Lagrange, and Baron von Holbach, have been respectively believed and proclaimed each the real author, or two or three of them co-operatively the real authors. However, after having consulted various books on this question, the supposition that the person I have above named was the only or at least the principal author, seems to have by far the greatest probability in its favor, a probability amounting to all but certainty, if we only admit that other kindred spirits of that period with whom Holbach — he had been born in the Bavarian Palatinate, but spent his whole life in Paris, and always wrote in French — stood in more or less intimate personal connexion, e. g. the mathematician Lagrange who was domestic tutor to Holbach's sons, contributed their quota to this notorious literary performance. *Published* it was under the name of Mirabaud,¹⁾ „Secrétaire Perpétuel, et l'un des Quarante de l'Académie Française“, who, however, would not seem to have had anything whatsoever to do with it. (As far as I can learn, he died anno 1760 already at the advanced age of 85; some have even declared him to be a merely *fictionous* personage, whilst others have confounded him with the well-known Mirabeau, the father of the still better-known hero of the French Revolution.)

No student of history can be supposed entirely *unacquainted* with the mental and moral, or political and social, aspects and characteristics of that period, into which the appearance of this book transplants us, in the Metropolis of France. Mme. de Pompadour, even she, had had good reason and right to turn prophetess with her often quoted „après nous le Déluge“; and not without savage earnestness and grim veracity were the voices of even those who by and by shouted „vive l'Enfer!“ For, lo! a great flood of tears and

¹⁾ *Système de la Nature, ou des Loix du Monde Physique et du Monde Moral*, par M. Mirabaud, Londres 1770 (2 voll. 8). This is the earliest edition. The portion which will immediately concern us is Partie I, ch. XIV, pp. 308—311. Cf. also Partie II, ch. XIV.

blood ere long broke forth over both victors and victims, and soon for a long, long while Tartarus-blackness lowered over altars, and from hearths Cocytus-plaints were heard. Thus a people sighs and shrieks, when, after a century of compulsory silence, it finds a voice in an opportune hour. O ye Rulers of Men, forget it not! — —

Holbach's absolutely and sweepingly vindictory opinions concerning suicide fill a few pages of the original, and are enunciated with a sort of eloquence which is dazzling, despite repetitions and declamations, and at once announce themselves as, howsoever bold, frivolous, impious they may appear, at least the result of sincere and enthusiastic conviction. Without adhering to the author's own sequence of argumentation, I will then faithfully record in a charter of six points the substance of his teachings on our topic; and I feel myself all the more bound to do so, because in England copies of the work under consideration are very rarely to be found in public libraries, and have to be sought, keeping Paine's *Age of Reason* and kindred productions company, in the book-stalls of *Socialism* and *Chartism*.

1. Man is only a „foible jouet dans la main de la nécessité“; the order of nature renders him happy, or the contrary; if the latter she thereby announces to him that she does not will his existence and he, therefore, only executes her decree, when he terminates his being: she herself reaches to him the iron which she has prepared in her own womb. — 2. Man is, whensoever Nature ceases to render him happy, *not under any obligation to her*: she caused him to originate, without asking him; nor is Nature, in her turn, under any obligation to man: she removes him without asking him. Human beings can love their existence only on the condition of happiness; if nature refuse to them this boon, they may quit being; they are, indeed, properly speaking then already *no more*: „une nature qui s'obstine à rendre notre existence malheureuse, nous ordonne d'en sortir.“ — 3. Man is not under any obligation to *Society*, whenever he ceases to feel himself well, comfortable in it: „une société qui se peut ou ne veut nous procurer aucun bien, perd tous ses droits sur nous.“ The wise, if the relations of life and the characters of their fellow-beings oppress them, withdraw themselves from the disrelished throng into the solitude of the grave: „la mort est le remède unique du désespoir.“ Nor have people any right to complain about the loss of a human being who was not, and could not be, happy among them. Indeed,

„would not society rather be a gainer, if it could persuade e. g. the wicked to free it from the sight of such disagreeable objects as those are of whom the laws must rid it, instead of they themselves ridding it of themselves?“ — 4. The Superstitious (i. e. according to our author's meaning, the Christians) have a cruel God who rejoices at seeing them reduced to despair: they have received a commandment to suffer on; for them there is no end to suffering, etc. Yet, Eternity cannot do any hurt to those who have departed out of this life by a self-inflicted death, inasmuch as they do not carry thither their organs, or their feelings, or their memory, or their ideas. — 5. Inasmuch as life is the greatest good, nobody „voluntarily“ deprives himself of it, unless thereto „impelled“ by an invincible power, i. e. la nécessité: „si l'homme n'est libre dans aucune instant de sa vie, il l'est encore *bien moins* dans l'acte qui la termine.“ That unconquerable power, however, to which the suicide has succumbed, can be rightly comprehended and fully appreciated only by such as are endowed with his organisation, temperament, passions, ideas; consequently, nobody else possesses the requisite ability to judge of the deed done. — 6. Nothing is more useful than to inspire into man a contempt of death, because the fear of death makes cowards, and to banish from his mind all false notions about the consequences of death, because the fear of the consequences of death makes fanatics, or pious melancholists, useless to themselves and to others. If it were but universally acknowledged and felt that suicide is lawful, then truth would be more stoutly proclaimed, liberty more valiantly earned, battles more bravely fought, victories more quickly achieved. — — —

Only one brief word in explanation, not only of some of the items just specified, but of the very title of the book itself. Most of us are wont to conceive of an all-governing mind with intelligent design as what we term — though the expression be not clear, and, perchance, the thought therewith connected also not always exactly very clear — the *Personal Deity*; but not thus the author of the book now occupying us. In the stead of what we call God he throughout places „Nature“, and in the stead of what we call Divine Providence he throughout places the Energy of Nature or „Necessity.“ What he, therefore, means by „le système de la Nature“ is, as we might say, physical metaphysics, a species of thinking which seemed „atheistical“ to the late evangelically orthodox Dr. Chal-

mers,¹⁾ and at which the unitarian Deism of Priestley and even the philosophical infidelity of Frederic the Great took offence. Be this hint sufficient about its negative or destructive theological elements: yet, among the chaff there is also some wheat of ethical sort though the chapter on our topic most certainly does not belong thereto; and I doubt not but that — for the book was reprinted in Paris by the Republican press — not a few of the many suicides which were committed in France amid Marseillaise-hymns and Strumpet-worships might be placed to the account of this very chapter: wherefore, I will go for a moment out of my way to call attention to a counter-voice which endeavored to make itself heard at Paris during the Revolution from one of the most prominent sects of Freethinkers. I allude to the „Théophilantropes“ or „adepteurs de Dieu et amis des hommes.“ This sect²⁾ originated anno 1796 under the auspices of Réveillère-Lepaux, and aimed at establishing and vindicating morality without much or any specific aid from either revealed religion or ecclesiastical dogmas. Its meetings had commenced in a private house, but subsequently several churches were opened to it; Bonaparte, however, anno 1801 put an end to it, because it was in part too free and in part too „ideological“ for him — I use these words deliberately — political catholicism. — We then, in one of their published discourses on the immortality of the soul³⁾ I find, beside much arguing to and fro in favor of the belief therein as compared with the disadvantages arising from the opposite faith, the two following implicitly emphatically anti-suicidal passages. „Ah! si l'on pouvait lire dans le coeur de ces malheureux qui se donnent la mort, on verroit qu'avant que le désespoir y entrât, le dogme précieux de l'immortalité en étoit banni; que l'affreux suicide n'avait armé leur main barbare, qu'après que l'incrédulité avait flétri et dégradé leur ame. Préférant alors les horreurs du néant à la satiété d'une vie malheureuse et insupportable pour celui qui ne voit rien au-delà, ils en déposent l'effrayant fardeau, et procurent, par cet attentat contre eux-mêmes, combien le dogme de l'immortalité de l'ame est précieux et nécessaire au bonheur de la

¹⁾ Bridgewater Treatises, vol. I, p. 33, note. The writings of Priestley and Frederic the Great against the said book I knew only at second hand.

²⁾ These few historical notices I owe to Wachsmuth's *historische Skizzen des Freireligionswesens*, 4 Voll., passim. ³⁾ Vide their *Code religieux et moral*, par J. B. Chemin, Paris, an VI, t. 1. c. 1799, T. II, pp. 57, 60.

société.“ And, speaking of a person unjustly condemned. „Que va-t-il faire ! va-t-il terminer lui-même sa vie et ses misères ? pour-quoi tarde-t-il ? d'où peut lui venir cette incroyable patience ? Ah ! c'est qu'à travers les épaisses ténèbres dont il est environné, un rayon d'une lumière bienfesante lui découvre sur les murs de son cachot ces mots imposans : Garde-toi d'attenter à tes jours. Dieu te voit et t'entend. Il te dédommagera dans l'autre vie des maux que tu souffres dans celle-ci. Recueille toutes les forces de ton âme, ô mon fils ! Attends que le grand être qui t'a formé, t'appelle à lui. Sache te résigner et souffrir.“

XII. Gibbon († 1794).

Had the author of the *Decline and Fall* been a merely ordinary historian in the popular sense of the latter term, we might reasonably have hesitated to assign to him here a place among pro-suicidal moral philosophers, because he has in the one or the other passage of his both „luminous“ and „voluminous“ work incidentally touched upon our topic, since we, for reasons elsewhere stated, omitted also the generality of Greek and Roman historiographers, when we were discussing the philosophy of classical antiquity. But, Gibbon might be said to resemble in *this one respect* Tacitus, that he penned history with a strong admixture of his own subjectivity. Writing *con amore* in the most special sense, and at his leisure, and even for his own somewhat peculiar kind of edification, he designedly and determinedly caused his representation of events, opinions, actions, characters to mirror his own principles, views, tastes, prejudices. A *philosopher* of the school of Hume, he, in this respect unlike Hume himself, selected historiography as the (almost) *exclusive* medium for the utterance of his doubts and heresies.

I have often already quoted the *Decline and Fall* in this Treatise, and have learnt even for my immediate subject a good deal from a scrupulous perusal of the text and more especially the notes ; I may, therefore, be pardoned, if I venture to record, before I pass on to my especial topic, in a very few words my own humble impression about the twofold charge which we Englishmen at least generally bring against this performance of his, viz. that of looseness,¹⁾ and that of infidelity.²⁾

¹⁾ Vide e. g. a critique of his *Miscellaneous Works* in the *Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1815, pp. 373, 387—389. ²⁾ Vide e. g. the late Rev.^d George Gillman's tirade in his *Gallery of Literary Portraits*, pag. 141 in the art. on Thomas de Quincey.

No rebukes, methinks, can be too stern and no lashes too merciless in regard to the first of these two points, the ethical one. His relish for sensual colorings and obscene allusions is undignified unmanly, absolutely painful, not to employ a still stronger adjective. It is no excuse that he has banished most of them into the Latin and Greek quotations given in the notes, an apology which he himself, if I recollect rightly, on one occasion makes; for, even if it were fitting to cause that to be reprinted at all in a book intended for the widest public which is not fit to be said in English, he ought to have borne in mind that youths at school and college who are well able and very likely to construe his objectionable quotations from the classical authors, Byzantine chroniclers etc. are just the persons most easily affected and injured by them. It is, of course, likewise no excuse that Gibbon himself was a man of unimpeached private morals. So was Wieland too. But an author's good life is as little an apology for his bad writing as would his writing *piously* be a palliation of his living viciously.

Touching the second charge, however, the dogmatical one, radical heterodoxy not only, but manifest hostility to christianity, as evinced more especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, and perhaps, also in chapters twenty two and twenty three, I question much, whether reason and equity would warrant its being made so heavy and sweeping as it has been made. Granting that Gibbon studiously evades all discussion concerning the divine origin of the religion of Christ, that he ambiguously avoids examining into the unquestionably spiritual nature of some of the peculiar tenets of Christianity, that his cold temperament totally incapacitated him for aught like fervid sympathy with some of the undeniably beautiful and glorious phenomena of early Christian self-denial, world-abnegation, heroic faithfulness unto death, I also grant that such elements in his history are not of good. Admitting, too, that he evidences also a supreme contempt for the bickerings and squabbings, the animosities and persecutions of both catholic and sectarian christian controversialists from the second century of our era upwards, and lets no opportunity slip by for displaying circumstantially that at a comparatively early period already fanaticism, superstition and sacerdotal cunning and scheming were busily at work in the name and under the mask of orthodox faith and pious zeal, I am anything but prepared to admit that likewise these elements in his history

are exactly of evil. At least, when I reflect upon what is going on in our own time in various christian lands and religious coteries, and observe that even Guizot, so zealous and sensitive in the cause of historical veracity, ere he unwisely exchanged his professorial chair, which he adorned, for the ministerial bench which gave way under his royal master's selfish and crooked policy, and Milman, so minutious and well-read in matters of orthodox ecclesiastical detail, have been unable to point out in their respective numerous notes and strictures any serious inaccuracies or wilful misstatements of Gibbon's which really signify much in this point of view, I most strongly incline to maintain that our third great British historian was fairer and juster than most bigoted and pious modern church-historians allow him to have been. Gibbon reproduces the *facts* which both pagan and christian writers had placed before him, narrates them faithfully in ninety nine cases out of a hundred, and, no doubt, meant to represent them impartially, and facts are „stubborn things.“ Mere pop-guns fired off by refiners or pedants avail but little in such matters, I ween, against the heavy artillery which his solid learning and strong brain placed at his command. Similarly, to allude to a kindred literary phenomenon in our own days, Prussian curates and courtiers may rail and rave at Strauss's „*der Romantiker auf dem Thron der Cäsaren*;" but, can all their assertions and objections do away with the saddening and sickening verity of the parallel therein drawn by a most vigorous and skilful hand? —

But, advancing at length to our proper theme, whose attention would not be at once rivetted by the following few scattered reflections in the already more than once quoted chapter (the forty-fourth) on the Code of Justinian? „From the portico, the Roman civilians (i. e. jurisconsults in the Justinian code) learned to live, to reason, to die.“ „Yet the (viz. Roman) civilians have always respected the *natural right* of a citizen to dispose of his life.“ The powers of this world have indeed lost their dominion over him who is resolved on death; and his arm can only be restrained by the religious apprehension of a future state.“ But the precepts of the gospel, or the church, have at length imposed a *pious servitude* on the minds of Christians, and condemn them to expect without a murmur, the last stroke of disease or the executioner.“ ... „The criminal penalties (viz. in opposition to the civil limitations) are the production of a later and *darker* age.“ Moore (vol. II, p. 70 of the work

quoted in the Preface) has fixed upon the expression „pious servitude,” and tersely says that it „lets us as much into the author's sentiments on the subject of suicide, as if he had written a whole volume in its favor.” No doubt, it does. But, besides the said expression, many, very many passages here and there in the Decline and Fall would even without it suffice to demonstrate, to me at least, that Gibbon was a veritable *Pagan Stoic* on the question of self-slaughter. To some of these I have already incidentally called the reader's attention; two or three others, in which more especially the sarcastic, sneering tone deserves to be noticed, I will now cite. In the reign of Justinian, a certain Photius stabbed himself rather than become a convert to Christianity; and Gibbon praises the deed — When recounting the slow and torturing death of the Byzantine emperor Andronicus, he sarcastically exclaims: „nor can we blame his *pusillanimous* resignation, since a Greek *Christian* was no longer master of his life.” — When speaking of the brutal sensuality of Maxentius, he says „and there remains *one* (the exact signification of which monosyllable is not quite clear to me here, by the by) memorable example of a noble matron, who preserved her chastity by a voluntary death the virtuous matron, who stabbed herself to escape the violence of Maxentius, was a Christian, wife to the praefect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It still remains a question among the casuists, whether, on such occasions, suicide is justifiable?” — „Perhaps, Augustinus was too rigid in the censure of this act of female heroism.” (Let us not forget that our historian was anything but a *hyper-delicate* man.)

XIII. M^{me} de Staël († 1817).

I should have almost shrunk from introducing a female writer into the strange society of the thinkers and authors to whom this book is specially devoted, had not this same French Protestant lady by the *masculine* tone of her mind, the speculative cast of her pursuits, and the classical rank of her works become inseparable, as it were, from the most distinguished and influential members of the modern literary republic in regard to social and ethical topics. Moreover, our particular theme enacts an extremely prominent part in several of her numerous productions, as we shall presently see.

¹) Vide vol. IV, pp. 364, 459; chapt. XIV, note 45; ch. XXXI, notes 102, 103; and cf. also chapters IX, X, XI, XIII, XVIII, XLIII, *passim*.

Anno 1796, being then twenty eight years of age, she published her first larger notable work,¹⁾ which, according to her own Preface, was to be only the first part of a philosophico-historical treatise which has, however, never been completed, so that we must regard the work at issue as a mere fragment. That it is well worthy of study, one certainly cannot deny, since it contains numerous very ingenious and delicate observations, side by side, however, with an equal number of bold and extravagant ones, as we might have expected from the M^{me} de Staël in embryo. In various chapters of his book, now, we find somewhat lengthy utterances, whether we choose to call them arguments or only testimonies, in favor of self-laughter, which I will extract in their unbroken totality, since they are not only in and by themselves curious, but have become the more remarkable through the circumstance that the authoress herself, as we shall by and by see, in her riper age repented having ever penned them.

In that chapter on love which contains the often-repeated saying that „with women the entire history of their lives is only love; only episode it is in the history of men“, she says, when speaking of lost love on the part of a woman, what follows. „Il n'y a que les hommes capables de la résolution de se tuer qui puissent, avec quelque ombre de sagesse, tenter cette grande route de bonheur (i. e. of love): mais qui veut vivre et s'expose à rétrograder; mais qui veut vivre et renonce, d'une manière quelconque, à l'empire de soi-même, se voue comme un insensé au plus cruel des malheurs.“ Here she herself appends the following would-be apologetic or justificatory note. „Je crains qu'on ne m'accuse d'avoir parlé trop souvent dans le cours de cet ouvrage, du suicide comme d'un acte digne de louanges; je ne l'ai point examiné sous le rapport toujours respectable (1) des principes religieux; mais politiquement, je crois que les républiques ne peuvent se passer du sentiment qui portoit les anciens à se donner la mort; et dans les situations particulières, les âmes passionnées qui s'abandonnent à leur nature, ont besoin d'envisager cette ressource pour ne pas se dépraver dans le malheur; et plus encore, peut-être, au milieu des efforts qu'elles tentent pour

¹⁾ De l'influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations. The following rather lengthy extracts occur successively in sect. I, ch. IV, pp. 126, 131, 132; ch. VIII. Du crime, pp. 192—195; sect. III, ch. III. De la philosophie, pp. 248—249.

l'éviter." — „Quelle ressource dans le monde peut-il exister contre une telle douleur? (i. e. the loss of the fidelity of the beloved). Le courage de se tuer; mais dans cette situation le secours même de cet acte terrible est privé de la sorte de douceur qu'on peut y attacher; l'espoir d'intéresser après soi, cette immortalité si nécessaire aux âmes sensibles, est ravie pour jamais à celle qui n'espère pas de regrets. C'est là mourir en effet que n'affliger, ni punir, ni rattracher dans son souvenir, l'objet qui vous a trahi; et le laisser à celle qu'il préfère, est une image de douleur qui se place au-dessus du tombeau, comme si cette idée devoit vous y suivre." And, when speaking of the state into which the commission and passion of crime hurls the human soul. „On se demande pourquoi, dans un état si pénible, les suicides ne sont pas plus fréquens, car la mort est le seul remède à l'irréparable? Mais de ce que les criminels ne se tuent presque jamais, on ne doit point en conclure qu'ils sont moins malheureux que les hommes qui se résolvent au suicide. Sans parler même du vague effroi que doit inspirer aux coupables ce qui peut suivre cette vie, il y a quelque chose de sensible ou de philosophique dans l'action de se tuer, qui l'est tout-à-fait étrange à l'être dépravé. Si l'on quitte la vie pour échapper aux peines du coeur, on désire laisser quelques regrets après soi; si l'on est conduit au suicide par un profond dégoût de l'existence, qui sert à juger la destinée humaine, il faut que des réflexions profondes, de longs retours sur soi, aient précédé cette résolution; et la haine qu'éprouve l'homme criminel contre ses ennemis, le besoin qu'il a de leur nuire, lui feroient craindre de les laisser en repos par sa mort: la fureur dont il est agité, loin de le dégoûter de la vie, fait qu'il s'acharne davantage à tout ce qui lui a coûté si cher. Un certain degré de peine décourage et fatigue; l'irritation du crime attache à l'existence par un mélange de crainte et de fureur; elle devient une sorte de proie qu'on conserve pour la déchirer." — „Le courage qui fait braver la mort n'a point de rapport avec la disposition qui décide à se la donner: les grands criminels peuvent être intrépides dans le danger; c'est une suite de l'enivrement, c'est une émotion, c'est un moyen, c'est un espoir, c'est une action; mais ces mêmes hommes, quoique les plus malheureux des êtres, ne se tuent presque jamais, soit que la Providence n'ait pas voulu leur laisser cette sublime (!) ressource, soit qu'il y ait dans le crime une ardeur personnelle qui, sans donner aucune jouissance, exclut les sentimens

élevés avec lesquels on renonce à la vie. Hélas! il seroit si difficile de ne pas s'intéresser à l'homme plus grand que la nature, alors qu'il rejette ce qu'il tient d'elle, alors qu'il se sert de la vie pour détruire la vie, alors qu'il sait dompter par la puissance de l'âme le plus fort mouvement de l'homme, l'instinct de sa conservation. Il seroit si difficile de ne pas croire à quelques mouvemens de générosité dans l'homme qui, par repentir, se donneroit la mort, qu'il est bon que les véritables scélérats soient incapables d'une telle action; ce seroit une souffrance pour une âme honnête, que de ne pas pouvoir mépriser complètement l'être qui lui inspire de l'horreur." And, finally, elsewhere in the same work thus." Je l'ai dit, celui qui veut mettre le suicide au nombre de ses résolutions, peut entrer dans la carrière des passions; il peut y abandonner sa vie, s'il se sent capable de la terminer, alors que la foudre aura renversé l'objet de tous ses efforts et de tous ses vœux; mais comme je ne sais quel instinct, qui appartient plus, je crois, à la nature physique qu'au sentiment moral (1), force souvent à conserver des jours dont tous les instans sont une nouvelle douleur, peut-on courir les hasards, presque certains, d'un malheur qui fera détester l'existence, et d'une disposition de l'âme qui inspirera la crainte de l'anéantir? Non que dans cette situation la vie ait encore quelques charmes, mais parce qu'il faut rassembler dans un même moment tous les motifs de sa douleur pour lutter contre l'indivisible pensée de la mort; parce que le malheur se répand sur l'étendue des jours, tandis que la terreur qu'inspire le suicide se concentre en entier dans un instant, et que pour se tuer, il faudroit embrasser le tableau de ses infortunes comme le spectacle de sa fin, à l'aide de l'intensité d'un seul sentiment et d'une seule idée." „Rien cependant n'inspire autant d'horreur que la possibilité d'exister, uniquement parce qu'on ne sait pas mourir; et comme c'est le sort qui peut attendre toutes les grandes passions, un tel objet d'effroi suffit pour faire aimer cette puissance de philosophie, qui soutient toujours l'homme au niveau de la vie, sans l'y trop attacher, mais sans la lui faire haïr."

M^{me} de Staël's own counter-work, the „réflexions sur le suicide“, to which I have on more than one occasion already referred, published anno 1813, affords the best commentary on the above quoted passages. In a note, namely, to the introductory notice thereto prefixed, she as sensibly as modestly writes to the following effect. „In my work on the influence of the Passions, I commended suicide: an

inconsiderate sentiment which I have ever since deeply regretted. wrote it, whilst in all the pride and all the vivacity of first youth but, to what purpose should we live, if we did not hope that it would produce amelioration?"

Her French biographer in the *Biographie universelle* (s. v. Staël-Holstein, pp. 406, 407), nevertheless, ascribes the origin of the reflexions to her desire to refute or rebut „la malice de ses ennemis” in reference to her Delphine. But, in this same *Treatise* she nowhere even so much as alludes to that Novel. However, we shall recur to this matter. Madame Necker de Saussure¹⁾ pronounces the *réflexions* a supplement (complément) to the work on the *Passions*; but, surely, such a designation is far too vague, since few would thereby understand a professed retraction or refutation. Her own words are. „Son ouvrage contre le suicide, en particulier, est très-curieux à rapprocher de celui-ci, dont il semble être le complément, puisque madame de Staël y offre le seul remède efficace aux maux qu'elle n'avoit guère fait auparavant que signaler.” A. de Staël has assigned to them the position of a sort of appendix to the work on the *Passions*, and in a note²⁾ gives his motive for deviating in this instance from the chronological arrangement of his mother's writings.

According to what I stated in the preliminary remarks to this §, any detailed discussion of M^{me} de Staël's anti-suicidal monograph would lie outside of our plan; yet, in consequence of its connexion with her previously published pro-suicidal sentiments, I will at least record some little about it.

In the extremely fulsome dedicatory epistle to Bernadotte, at that time Crown Prince of Sweden, — it is, however, somewhat difficult to divine what special interest that renowned military captain and subsequent prudent monarch could take in a booklet of this description, — the authoress informs him that in it, composed at a season of much outward and inward suffering, she had discussed our topic „sans malveillance comme sans exaltation.” Her son, who seems to have borne for the memory of his distinguished mother pretty much the same unusual measure of filial reverence which she herself had cherished for that of her father, M. Necker, assures us

¹⁾ Notice sur le caractère et les écrits de Madame de Staël, 1820, p. 77.

²⁾ Oeuvres complètes de Madame de Staël, publiées par son fils, 1820. T. III. p. 300. However, the „quelques années plus tard” are no fewer than seventeen!

that in it our theme is treated „avec une profonde conviction de la haute philosophie du christianisme.“ The writer in the *Biographie universelle* expresses the following opinion on it. „Elle professe hautement la doctrine enseignée par les plus sévères moralistes chrétiens. L'infortune, dans ce traité sur le suicide, est présentée comme un moyen régénérateur entre les mains de la Providence.“ Thielenfeld, on the contrary (vide the Preface to his already quoted little monograph), whilst admitting that M^{me} de Staël meant to describe suicide as immoral and sacrilegious, judges that she was not clear with herself about the *main* thought. For instance, according to her, the death of a beloved one may, though this be the only case, transcend the strength which God has imparted to us for the bearing of suffering, and then Providence, whose will it is that every wound of the soul should find a healing, comes to our aid, i. e. — for the context justifies us in supplying, nay, obliges us to supply — by suicide, or a permission to suicide. Let us compare with this e. g. 1 Cor. X, 13, and bear in mind how readily on this principle every suicide could or might or would find an excuse for his or her particular case: the key fits well many portals that have led, and will continue to lead, out of life. Indeed, if I myself must offer an opinion, the various instances in which I have expressed dissent from some of its passages would suffice to intimate that it excels rather by the beauty of style and imaginative pathos than by clear, correct statements, or definite, profound reasonings.

I have above alluded to her much-discussed „*Delphine*“, published anno 1804 or 1802, concerning which novel it has passed over into a sort of commonplace that it is the *real* M^{me} de Staël in her youth, whereas Corinne must be considered her ideal;¹⁾ and it was, I presume, on some such supposition that M^{me} de Genlis — in some work of hers with which I am not acquainted — „représentait (vide Bing. Univ. l. c. pp. 406, 407) M^{me} de Staël comme l'apologiste du suicide à l'aide de citations tronquées et d'interprétations artificielles.“ It is also whilst speaking of *Delphine* that M^{me} Necker de Saussure says (p. 109) „Puisqu'elle a fait un ouvrage exprès pour rétracter l'espèce d'apologie du suicide qu'on lui avoit reprochée, il est inutile de revenir sur ce point.“ Supposing, however,

¹⁾ Vide e. g. M^{me} Junot's celebrated *Women of all Countries*, p. 145 of the English translation.

M^{me} de Staël really to have meant Delphine for herself, and, consequently, to have subscribed to everything Delphine utters on the subject of her contemplated suicide, after M. de Serbellane had given her the ring containing poison which he, ever since the death of Therese, had, as he glories in stating, been wont to carry about him for purposes of self-destruction in case of need, there is, at the utmost, merely a vindication of the deed as far as *she herself* is concerned in her own most unhappy situation,¹⁾ and there is but small encouragement given by the light in which she views the act, or by the tone in which she speaks of it, to any person whatsoever to follow her example. — Nevertheless, among her posthumous papers an entirely altered non-suicidal conclusion in the place of the original catastrophe was found; and it is but just that we should let her speak for herself on the matter under debate.²⁾ After having expressly stated that she did not make this alteration on account of the matter of suicide, or, from deference to the opinions of such persons as had on this ground objected to the former suicidal termination, she thus proceeds: „il me semble qu'il convient de rappeler ici qu'un auteur n'exprime point son opinion particulière, en faisant agir ses personnages de telle ou telle manière.“ „Delphine, élevée dans le christianisme, dit positivement qu'elle commet une grande faute en se tuant, et sa prière exprime, je crois, son repentir avec force. Il m'est impossible de comprendre ce qu'il y a d'immoral dans cette situation ainsi représentée. — Je ne sais dans quel écrit du dix-neuvième siècle on dit que *le secret du parti philosophique, c'est le suicide*. Il faut convenir que si une telle assertion étoit vraie, ce parti auroit choisi une singulière manière de se recruter. Je n'ai point prétendu, dans Delphine, discuter le suicide, cette grande question qui inspire tant de pitié à la fois pour la folie et pour la raison humaine; et je ne pense pas qu'on puisse trouver un argument pour ou contre le suicide, dans l'exemple d'une femme qui, suivant à l'échafaud l'objet de toute sa tendresse, n'a pas la force de supporter la vie sous le poids d'une telle douleur.“

There is another brief article in M^{me} de Staël's collected works³⁾ which deserves a passing notice. On p. 21 of §. 63 I extracted a

¹⁾ It is true, she had made a semi-effort to destroy herself on a previous occasion, vide livre V, fragm. 5. ²⁾ Oeuvres, T. V, p. XXXIII ff.: „avertissement et quelques réflexions sur le but moral de Delphine.“ Vide more especially the beautiful and noble lettre 13, liv. VI. ³⁾ T. XVII, pp. 283 — 286: réponse à un article du journal (1814).

passage from her réflexions sur le suicide in which Jesus' deportment was adduced as a sort of anti-suicidal example and prototype. Some (Catholic) French journal or other had taken great offence at the said passage in its entire context and drift; but M^{me} de Staël would fain represent herself as a very reverent and orthodox lady, and she, therefore, defends herself from any and every similar journalistic insinuation in the following indignant, but somewhat too off-hand, manner. „On devroit conclure de cette façon de s'exprimer que, traitant Notre-Seigneur comme un homme et comme un homme ordinaire, je lui fais un mérite de ne s'être pas tué. *Quel ridicule et quelle impiété tout ensemble !*“

Finally, one question I would fain put to persons better acquainted with English history than I myself am. Appended to M^{me} de Staël's Réflexions sur le suicide are twenty pages of what she calls „Notice sur Lady Jane Grey.“ In it she communicates a long and beautiful epistle written by Lady Jane in prison shortly before her death to Dr Aylmers, one of the items of which is that Asham, her former classical tutor, had visited her, offered her poison, and suggested to her the propriety of escaping execution by taking it. From her pious and eloquent reply, I will select the following excellent parallel between antique pagan and modern christian morality in reference to our topic. „Les anciens élevoient leur âme par la contemplation de leurs propres forces, les chrétiens ont un témoin, et c'est devant lui qu'il faut vivre et mourir; les anciens vouloient glorifier la nature humaine, les chrétiens ne se regardent que comme la manifestation de Dieu sur la terre; les anciens mettoient au premier rang des vertus la mort qui soustrait au pouvoir des oppresseurs, les chrétiens estiment davantage le dévouement qui nous soumet aux volontés de la Providence. L'activité et la patience ont leur temps tour à tour; il faut faire usage de sa volonté tant que l'on peut ainsi servir les autres, et se perfectionner soi-même; mais lorsque la destinée est pour ainsi dire face à face avec nous, notre courage consiste à l'attendre, et regarder le sort est plus fier que s'en détourner. L'âme se concentre ainsi dans ses propres mystères, toute action extérieure seroit plus terrestre que la résignation.“ And also this sublime and decided passage. „Renoncer à la vie qu'on ne pourroit acheter qu'au prix de sa conscience, c'est le seul genre de suicide qui soit permis à l'homme vertueux.“ — But, is this epistle not purely fictitious? At least, I have never found it

anywhere else quoted; I have read e. g. Howard's very detailed, though very ill-written, life of Lady Jane Grey (published anno 1892), and therein certainly no allusion is made to this circumstance.

XIV. Fries († 1843).

A certain Mr. Thomas Carlyle, „Barrister-at-Law“ (consequently, of course, not the Thomas Carlyle, whom all earnest and thoughtful men must needs listen to and reverence, howsoever much they may differ from him on some points), several years ago published a small book,¹⁾ much smaller, however, in intrinsic value than even in outward size, in which we find such epithets as „speculative wildness“, „abstruse technicologies“, „unfruitful sentimentality“ and „rationalizing laxity“ bestowed upon the modern theology of Germany, and upon modern *German metaphysics* such epithets as „the most subtle licentiousness“, „flagrant immorality“, „subversive scepticism“, „destructive heresy“, and „revolting blasphemy.“ I do not know with what degree of attention or favor the said work has met; yet, I doubt not its having piously impressed, besides sundry young and elderly evangelical ladies who have an unconquerable *weakness* for dabbling in Theology, e. g. sundry clergymen who²⁾ say „beware of the Germans, for they are all Pantheists at heart“, but who, it turns out in the sequel, have never read a German book in their lives, but only e. g. the Quarterly Review *about* German books. — Well, few educated Englishmen are unacquainted with the name of Schleiermacher, since his Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato, his Criticisms on the Gospel of Luke, etc. have been translated into our language, and, probably, occasionally prove of some service to both under-graduates and graduates at our Universities; and, inasmuch as he was, unquestionably, one of the profoundest divines and one of the most devout men whom Europe has beheld since the days of the Reformation, some few of my readers may, perhaps, care to know what he thought and preached anno 1806 about *our* stereotype theology and self-complacent piety. „Those proud islanders, by many improperly revered, know no other watch-word except *to gain and to enjoy*; their zeal for science is only an empty combat-play, their wisdom of life a false jewel, skilfully and deceptively composed, as it is their wont, and their sacred liberty itself only too often

¹⁾ Moral Phenomena of Germany, pp. 12, 67 etc. ²⁾ Vide Kingsley's *Yeast*, ch. 3.

serves selfishness at a low price. Nowhere, indeed, are they earnest about what goes beyond palpable utility. For, they have robbed all science of life, and use only the dead wood as masts and oars for their gain-seeking voyage of life. And in the same manner they know nothing about Religion, except only that every one preaches attachment to old customs and defends his statutes, and looks upon this as a means wisely saved up by the Constitution against the hereditary enemy of the State." However, the great Schleiermacher was comparatively young, when he spoke thus about us, and the times were then somewhat different from later decennaries, and he was, moreover, tempted to indulge from the pulpit in the licence of rhetoric; perhaps, therefore, twenty years later the more matured man, with increased sources of information, would have judged of us far less severely? We'll hear. Anno 1821, he himself appended the following note to the above passage of his *Discourses on Religion, addressed to the Educated among her contemners*.¹⁾ „One must consider that, partly also, that at that time the great popular interest in the missionary cause and the propagation of the Bible had not yet shown itself on that island as now. Nevertheless, I should not like to retract much of the former judgment on account of these latter phenomena. For, on the one hand, there the habitude of founding considerable undertakings upon the organic private union of the abilities of individuals is so common, and the successes achieved in this way are so great, that also those who do not seriously sympathize with anything except the progress of civilization and their own gain therefrom, yet do not like to exclude themselves from participation in those undertakings which have emanated from the by far smaller number of truly pious persons, simply in order not to weaken the principle. But, on the other hand, it also cannot be denied that those undertakings themselves are viewed by a great number more from a political and mercantile standing-point. For, that here the pure interest of christian piety is not paramount, is manifest indeed already from the circumstance that one has wrought far later and, it appears also, with far less signal success for the great wants of religious interest which were to be satisfied at home. However, these are mere intimations by means of which I will confess my faith that also a more accurate illustration of the state of

¹⁾ Schleiermacher's *Sämmtliche Werke*, B. I, pp. 152, 160.

religion in England would rather confirm than refute that judgment. And the same holds good of what is said touching the scientific spirit."

And, these „intimations“ are more than mere declamations, I ween, more than Mr. Thomas Carlyle's above quoted trash. Nay, not to go away from the very man, a man of great scientific attainments, a severe logician, and a zealous seeker after what is true and noble and beautiful, whose views on our topic we are about to cite, we find in the last oration he delivered to the students of Jena, at which university he occupied the chair of mental and moral philosophy up to his death, the following reflection on the state of religion in England anno 1843.¹⁾ „What avails it for the free mind, if, as in England, ever so rich treasures lie dedicated to religious life, when upon those treasures the curse of ancient rude violence (after rober Gswaltthat) rests, when the religion of the State, Religion of the Aristocrats, remains only the political support of the Aristocracy?“

I have not given these testimonies of Schleiermacher and Fries, because I subscribe to them *in toto*; for, even since 1843 much of all this has considerably changed for the better, as we have excellent reason to know. But, for Heaven's sake, let us cease to employ hard names, and bring heavy charges, against the Theology and Metaphysics of our German brethren, because they chance not to suit our taste, or meet with our approval, or be within the range of our intellect and culture. We may be unobjectionably orthodox, and yet not particularly pious; our religious books may be very clear, and yet very cold and shallow; our sermons may be devoid of unfaith, but — *of faith also*; verily, we do not hold all truth and all godliness in our especial custody; holes are *easily* discovered by all discerning foreigners in the coat also of *our* national christianity: — therefore, to use a homely phrase, let us, seeing that we too live in a glass-house, beware of throwing stones at our neighbour's glass-house.

It is not my task here to discuss any purely *speculative* point of modern German metaphysics; nor will I deny that I am thankful that it is not, since I too have in my individual measure many a time felt that even penal task-work might almost become an enviable pastime in comparison with the endeavor to acquire satisfactory re-

¹⁾ Letzte Worte an die Studirenden in Jena, 1843, p. 22.

sults from *some* of the theories which are therein broached. My present concernment with the said metaphysics is, on the contrary, rather of a solely *practical* nature, viz. the simple question: how have they positioned themselves to that topic the history of which we have hitherto been surveying?

The *chief moral* writers among the metaphysical celebrities of modern Germany were, doubtless, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.

Kant has in several of his works¹⁾ argued elaborately, with a sort of predilection and, as it seems to me, over-rigorous and too contemptuously, against suicide.

Fichte argued against suicide with equal decision and earnestness, and not only with greater acuteness and clearness, but also in what has appeared to me a much nobler spirit and a far more befitting tone.²⁾

Some of their respective utterances have been, if I remember rightly, alluded to in the course of this Treatise; but, I trust, their works themselves are now no longer wanting in any well-regulated English Public Library, so that the reader may turn for himself to the passages I have referred to.

Hegel, finally, the great leader of the most recent, most daring, and most influential theologico-metaphysical movement in Germany, who rendered for many years Berlin, where he taught, to hundreds and thousands of those who asked „what is Truth?“ a sort of modern christian Eleusis, Memphis, or Benares: he, too, doubtless, meant to deny in toto a man's right ever to slay himself, though his wording of the matter is all but unintelligibly clumsy and abrupt, and most oracularly brief; in substance, however, this: life is the *comprehensive* totality of external activity, i. e. the medium of duty, and self-wrought destruction of it, even in the most heroic antique form, simply and absolutely anti-duteous.³⁾

And even among those metaphysical thinkers whom we might

¹⁾ *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*, 1797, Buch I, §. 6; *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, §. 76, pp. 179, 180 in B. VII, Abth. 2 of his *sämtliche Werke*; *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785, p. 48 in B. VIII; and cf. also his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Th. II, p. 308 *ibid.*, and the Essay mentioned in §. 13. ²⁾ *Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Principien der Wissenschaftslehre*, 1798, §. 2, pp. 263—268 of B. IV of his *sämtliche Werke*, edited by his son J. H. Fichte. ³⁾ *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, §. 70, pp. 112, 113 of B. VIII of his *sämtliche Werke*. The Zusatz to the original § which the Editor, Gans, has given from Hegel's MS, makes the argument somewhat more popular, but not either novel or impressive.

account as belonging to the second rank of modern German moral philosophers there is only one who can be said to have vindicated suicide; and this one was the above-mentioned Jakob Friedrich Fries, who in two of his works,¹⁾ which were respectively composed at different periods of his life, frankly avowed himself a Stoic on the question at issue (*„Ich trete, in einer viel bestrittenen Sache, hier der Lehre der stoischen Philosophie bei“*), or, at least, something very like one. However, some few of his most decisive sentences (with the omission of his various objections to the usual anti-suicidal arguments) now detachedly follow, and they will speak with sufficient clearness for themselves. The most striking words shall be printed in italics.

From the earlier work. First sentence. *„Unter allen Erbgeliebten haben die Götter (sic!) allein dem Menschen die herrliche Freiheit gestattet, ohne lange Abrechnung mit der Natur, den Tod zu wählen, wenn ihm das Leben keinen Werth mehr hat. Diesen herrlichen Vorzug will man uns durch die Moral wieder entreißen.“* *„Wenn ein Volk wirklich aus lauter Menschen besteht, die lieber todt als lebendig sind, so kann es in der That nichts Besseres thun als in Masse dem Dinge ein Ende machen, und der Natur die Sorge für eine neue Bevölkerung überlassen.“* *„Wenn dem aber nun also ist, und wenn es in der That der Pflicht nicht zuwider ist, vielmehr sie gar nicht trifft, mir das Leben zu nehmen, wenn es mir nicht mehr gefallen kann: so“* *„Die ganze Streitfrage um den Selbstmord bezieht sich in der That gar nicht auf sittliche Ueberzeugung, sondern auf eine bloße Rückrechnung der Klugheit. Man sieht wohl, daß es damit, wenn jemand sich das Leben nimmt, nur weil es ihm nicht mehr gefällt, nur selten seine Nichtigkeit habe: aber das nicht bewegen, weil er daran pflichtwidrig handelt, sondern weil er damit einen dummen Streich begeht.“* The concluding sentence runs thus. *„Mit der Pflicht hängt diese That immer nur mittelbar zusammen, wen freylich durch ein ehrloses Motiv zu ihr getrieben wird, thut daran unrecht, aber nicht um ihrentwillen, sondern um des Motivs willen.“*

From the later work. *„Selbstentleibung ist eine sittlich gleichgültige That, welche erst mittelbar durch ihre Beweggründe sittlichen Werth oder Unwerth erhält, in diesen Bestimmungsgründen geistige Häßlichkeit*

¹⁾ Neue Kritik der Vernunft, 1807, B. III, pp. 195—198 (zweite Aufl. 1831); and Handbuch der praktischen Philosophie oder der philosophischen Sittenlehre, 1818, Band I, pp. 352—354.

oder Schönheit zeigt." „Bestände ein Gebot der Pflicht gegen die Selbstentleibung, so würden unter diesem über alles Wagen und Aufopfern des Lebens nur peinliche und verschrobene Urtheile übrig bleiben." „Mit Besonnenheit sich der widerwärtig und unerträglich drückenden Erdenlast ent schlagen, ist eine zu entschuldigende, aber immer Geisteschwäche verrathende That." — —

The very title of yon first-mentioned work implies that it was intended as a sort of pendant to Kant's great performance (the Criticism of Reason); and, indeed, Fries considered himself a continuator and developer of the Königsberg Sage's philosophy, and, therefore, in the matter under mention takes express occasion to revert to, and *polemize against*, Kant. The discerning and devout theologian Hagenbach, when speaking of de Wette, whose teacher Fries had been, designates ¹⁾ the system of the latter as „ideal-gläubig", i. e., if I may interpret this definition by a reference to Kant, as an attempt to combine the deep religious feelings of Jacobi's system with the somewhat dry and empty critical severity of Kant's. Nor has Fries remained alone in his anti-Kantism on this topic of ours; for, some years later, a more or less original and extremely vigorous and fresh sort of youthful philosophical champion stepped into the arena, determined to annihilate completely and in a most discourteous manner Kant's anti-suicidal arguments, though not exactly minded, like Fries, to crush *all possible* anti-suicidal argumentation, but rather inclining to substitute a kind and measure of anti-suicidal reasoning of his own thinking out and in itself sufficiently peculiar to deserve quotation here, more especially, since his strange publications are not always procurable. I allude to Schopenhauer, and the two works of his mentioned at the foot of the page. ²⁾

„Was man gewöhnlich als Pflichten gegen uns selbst aufstellt, ist zuvörderst ein in Vorurtheilen stark befangenes und aus den leichtesten Gründen geführtes Raisonnement gegen den Selbstmord. Dem Menschen allein, der nicht, wie das Thier, bloß den Körperlichen, auf die Gegenwart beschränkten, sondern auch den ungleich größeren, von Zukunft und Vergangenheit borgenden, geistigen Leiden Preis gegeben ist, hat die Natur, als Compensation, das Vorrecht verliehen, sein Leben, auch ehe sie ihm selbst ein Ziel setzt, beliebig enden zu können und

¹⁾ Gedächtnisrede auf de Wette, 1850, p. 25. ²⁾ Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik, 1841, §. 5, p. 127 and die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, zweite Aufl. 1844, Buch I, p. 108, and cf. also p. 367; and §. 62, pp. 442—454.

demnach nicht, wie das Thier, nothwendig so lange er kann, sondern auch nur so lange er will zu leben. Ob er nun, aus ethischen Gründen, dieses Vorrechts sich wieder zu begeben habe, ist eine schwierige Frage, die wenigstens nicht durch die gebräuchlichen, leichtesten Argumente entschieden werden kann. Auch die Gründe gegen den Selbstmord, welche Kant anzuführen nicht verschmäht, kann ich gewissenhafterweise nicht anders betiteln, als Armseligkeiten, die nicht einmal eine Antwort verdienen. Man muß lachen, wenn man sich denkt, daß dergleichen Reflexionen dem Cato, der Cleopatra, dem Coccejus Nerva oder der Anna den Dolch hätten aus den Händen winden sollen. Wenn es wirklich ächte moralische Motive gegen den Selbstmord giebt, so liegen diese jedenfalls sehr tief und sind nicht mit dem Sentiment der gewöhnlichen Ethik zu erreichen; sondern gehören einer höheren Betrachtungsweise an, als sogar dem Standpunkt gegenwärtiger Abhandlung angemessen ist.“ In a note he adds: „they are ascetic reasons; and are to be found in the fourth book of my chief work.“ To which same chief work we must, therefore, turn, if we would gain the needful information: and we will for a moment do so, reading carefully together the pertinent passages thereof.

Already in his development of Stoicism, he hints that „none of all those systems which interdicted suicide knew how to utter the true reason for the rejection of suicide, but merely toilsomely gather all sorts of apparent reasons“ (Scheingründe). He, however, according to his own account at least, has discovered the genuine philosopher's stone in this matter also; for he is in general not a little self-sufficient and decided. Omitting much mysticism, in which even a comparison of suicide with the Schiwa of the Hindoo Trimurti is not wanting, and much metaphysical jargon, though clothed in fresh and graphic diction, I shall be content with quoting what struck me as the best passage he has given birth to in connexion with the subject under debate. „Weil aber eben das Leiden, dem der Mensch sich durch Selbstmord entzieht, es war, welches als Mortifikation des Willens ihn zur Verneinung seiner selbst und zur Erlösung hätte führen können; so gleicht in dieser Hinsicht der Selbstmörder einem Kranken, der eine schmerzhafteste Operation, die ihn von Grund aus heilen könnte, nachdem sie angefangen, nicht vollenden läßt, sondern lieber die Krankheit behält. Das Leiden naht sich und eröffnet als solches die Möglichkeit zur Verneinung des Willens: aber er weißt es von sich, indem er die Erscheinung des Willens, den Leib, zerstört, damit der

Wille ungebrochen bleibe. — Dies ist der Grund, warum beinahe alle Ethiker, sowohl philosophische als religiöse, den Selbstmord verdammen, obgleich sie selbst hierzu keine andre, als seltsame sophistische Gründe angeben können. Sollte aber je ein Mensch aus rein ethischem Antriebe sich vom Selbstmorde zurückgehalten haben; so war der innerste Sinn dieser Selbstüberwindung (in was für Begriffe ihn seine Vernunft auch klebete) dieser: ich will mich dem Leiden nicht entziehen, damit es den Willen zum Leben, dessen Erscheinung so jammervoll ist, aufzuheben beitragen könne, indem es die mir schon jetzt aufgehende Erkenntniß vom eigentlichen Wesen der Welt dahin verstärkte, daß sie zum endlichen Quietiv meines Willens werde und mich auf immer erlöse. — — —

As to criticism on Fries' and Schopenhauer's anti-Kantian polemics, the thoughtful will, probably, find them somewhat wanting in penetrative clearness, or comprehensive grasp, or practical reverence; but let nobody flatter himself that by a few stereotype platitudes suchlike objections are fully and finally quashed.

And now this lengthiest of our §§ shall soon be brought to a close. It is obvious, on the one hand, that I should have assigned a place in this § to Rousseau, Frederic the Great, and even also to Voltaire (up to a certain point at least to the latter), had not other reasons induced me to discuss them in our third introductory chapter (vide §§. 18, 19, 21). And, on the other hand, it might not have proved very difficult to introduce sundry other modern writers who have, *partially at all events*, stood up for suicide, had I not already on p. 166 of this § declared that I would limit myself to the *principal* ones, i. e. to the principal ones among those *whose writings have become known to me*. It is very possible that some one or other post-reformatorial advocate of suicide has entirely escaped my notice; however, the reader must not hastily infer that I was ignorant, because I chose to be silent. Here a few instances by way of conclusion.

The well-known mathematician Maupertuis († 1759) has by some¹⁾ been understood as having intended to approve of suicide, viz. in that Essay from which I have more than once already quoted (vide §§. 3 and 13). But he himself defended himself against the

¹⁾ Thus, for instance, by Knüppeln in his Ueber den Selbstmord. Ein Buch für die Menschheit, 1790, p. 80.

charge in the following words.¹⁾ „On m'a reproché d'avoir parlé trop favorablement du Suicide. Considérant le Suicide hors de la crainte et de l'espérance d'une autre vie, je l'ai regardé comme un remède utile et permis: le considérant comme Chrétien, je l'ai regardé comme l'action la plus criminelle ou la plus insensée. Et tout cela me paroît si évident, que je ne saurois rien dire qui puisse en augmenter l'évidence. S'il n'y avoit rien au-delà de cette vie, il seroit souvent convenable de la terminer: mais le malheur de notre condition présente, au lieu de devoir nous en faire chercher le remède dans l'anéantissement, nous prouve au contraire que nous sommes destinés à une vie plus heureuse, dont l'espérance doit nous rendre celle-ci supportable.“

Then, I have met with, and perused, an essay by a certain M. Meilhan († 1803), which bears the title: „Le suicide, est-il un acte de Courage ou de Lâcheté?“²⁾ But, though this writer's net result is that „il est peu de circonstances où l'on puisse taxer de faiblesse la résolution d'une mort volontaire“, and that, moreover, suicide is, happily, quite pardonable in every case, and certainly not by any means exactly irreligious in any case, Meilhan was, albeit a polyhistor of some reputation in his day, after all more apt at mere book-making than characterized by serious and devout self-thinking.³⁾ and, since the question itself which he puts is one-sided and unsatisfactory (more especially, if we consider the somewhat external and shallow import which appertains to the terms „courage“ and „lâcheté“ in French), and we have said already quite enough on this bearing of the matter even e. g. in §. 26, we could consider ourselves perfectly justified in letting the said essay pass by without any detailed notice.

Also the scientific, original, witty Göttingen Professor Lichtenberg († 1799) in his acute and humorous autobiographical sketches and fragmentical Journals might be said to have on more than one occasion incidentally written apologetically of suicide. However, his utterances were meant merely as casual soliloquies, not as developed ethical theorems. Here follow the two most telling passages which the reader shall be left to form his own estimate of.⁴⁾ „Ich habe

¹⁾ Oeuvres de Maupertuis, edit. 1756, T. I, p. 189 in the Preface which is addressed to General Still. ²⁾ Oeuvres philosophiques et littéraires, 17 T. I, p. 368ff. ³⁾ Cf. Biographie Universelle, T. 42, pp. 2—5. ⁴⁾ Berni's Schriftm, B. I, pp. 37, 38, 63, 64 in the edit. 1844, and cf. p. 147, and note of the year 1770.

schon auf Schulen Erbauern vom Selbstmorde gelehrt, die den gemein angenommenen in der Welt schnurstracks entgegenstehen, und erinnere mich, daß ich einmal lateinisch für den Selbstmord disputirte und ihn zu vertheidigen suchte. Ich muß aber gestehen, daß die innere Ueberzeugung von der Billigkeit einer Sache (wie dieses aufmerksame Leser werden gefunden haben) oft ihren letzten Grund in etwas Dunkeltem hat, dessen Aufklärung äußerst schwer ist oder wenigstens scheint, weil eben der Widerspruch, den wir zwischen dem klar ausgedrückten Satze und unserm undeutlichen Gefühle bemerken, uns glauben macht, wir haben den rechten noch nicht gefunden. Im August 1769 und in den folgenden Monaten habe ich mehr an den Selbstmord gedacht als jemals, und allezeit habe ich bei mir befunden, daß ein Mensch, bei dem der Trieb zur Selbsterhaltung so geschwächt worden ist, daß er so leicht überwältigt werden kann, sich ohne Schuld ermorden könne. Ist ein Fehler begangen worden, so liegt er viel weiter zurück. Bei mir ist eine vielleicht zu lebhaftige Vorstellung des Todes, seines Anfangs und wie leicht er an sich ist, Schuld daran, daß ich vom Selbstmorde so denke.“ „Es wäre nicht gut, wenn die Selbstmörder oft mit der eigentlichen Sprache ihre Gründe angeben könnten; so aber reduziert sie sich jeder Hörer auf seine eigene Sprache, und entkräftet sie nicht so wohl dadurch, als macht ganz andere Dinge daraus. Einen Menschen recht zu verstehen, müßte man zuweilen der nämliche Mensch sein, den man verstehen will. Wer da weiß, was Gedankensystem ist, der wird mir Beifall geben. Desirers allein zu sein, und über sich selbst zu denken, und seine Welt aus sich zu machen, kann uns großes Vergnügen gewähren, aber wir arbeiten auf diese Art unwerth an einer Philosophie, nach welcher der Selbstmord billig und erlaubt ist. Es ist daher gut, sich durch einen Freund oder eine Freundin wieder an die Welt anzuhaken, um nicht ganz abzufallen.“

In the year 1784, the theological faculty of the University of Göttingen gave the following question for a prize-essay: „ob der Selbstmord nach den Gründen der christlichen Religion rechtmäßig oder unrechtmäßig sei?“ The successful competitor on this occasion was G. E. Groddeck, who subsequently earned for himself a considerable reputation on the field of scholarship and literature, and his dissertation was published anno 1785 under the title of „Commentatio de morte voluntaria.“ The second prize or so-called Accessit was adjudged to G. W. Bloek who anno 1792 published his dissertation,

considerably enlarged and translated by himself into German, and the title „Von dem Selbstmorde, dessen Moralität, Ursachen und Gegenmitteln.“ Neither of these dissertations have I had an opportunity of perusing; both of them, however, are said to have been decisions against the lawfulness of suicide, and the former more stringent and severe than the latter; and I should, therefore, not have alluded to them in this § or at all, had an anonymous German critic in a once very famous and popular, but somewhat shallow and coarse, rationalistic literary Periodical¹⁾ who, by the by, not unwisely, perhaps, pronounces the question of the Göttingen theological faculty *too circumscribed* (zu beschränkt), in an article on Block's Treatise not attempted to refute by laconic and sarcastic questions the reasons which Block had advanced against the lawfulness of suicide, giving us by this indirect and underhand process to understand that he considered them untenable, and deemed a result opposed to that which Block had evolved and arrived at more rational and correct. Of course, it is not our present business to answer the said reviewer's interrogations which it was not exactly difficult to put, wherefore we likewise need not quote them.

§. 75. THE OCCURRENCE OF SUICIDE IN MODERN CHRISTENDOM.

Howsoever numerous, varied, and inestimable the salutary effects may and must be deemed which the Great Reformation of the 16th century soon began to produce, and has the longer the more achieved in those countries which opened their Courts, Temples, Hearths to its influences, a *decrease of suicidal practice* most certainly cannot be numbered among the said effects. On the contrary, a far greater frequency of the commission of suicide in Protestant lands and among Protestant peoples as compared with Catholic ones appears to be an incontestable phenomenon. Schwartz, writing anno 1837, enumerates²⁾ those cities of Europe, in which the great increase of suicide is traceably visible, in the following order: Copenhagen, London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, so that the almost solely Protestant ones come first and also maintain the numerical precedence; Mme. de Staël.

¹⁾ Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek, Jahrgang 1793, B. I, pp. 486—493, but more especially pp. 491, 492. ²⁾ Christliche Geist, dritte Aufl., B. II, p. 161.

writing more than 20 years earlier, in her réflexions makes an assertion which is substantially to the same purpose, and she had travelled a good deal, and observed pretty closely, in both catholic and protestant countries; and Prof. Blumenbach, writing already in the last quarter of the 18th century, commences a passage¹⁾ thus: „inasmuch as, as far as I know, it is pretty universally confirmed that suicide on an average more rarely occurs in catholic than in protestant countries.“ — Many statistical details in confirmation of this fact have come within my reach, e. g. that in Spain anno 1826 only sixteen cases of suicide occurred among nearly 12 millions of inhabitants, and in Naples anno 1823 only thirteen cases, nine of which are marked as the consequence of insanity, among 350,000 inhabitants, whereas e. g. in Hamburg, among little more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, anno 1821 31 cases and anno 1822 59 cases of suicide occurred. But, mere dry statistical details are little to my taste. We may safely take the fact as an established one for granted, but must consider it worth our while, and not by any means foreign to our purpose, to enquire: whence this phenomenon?

In endeavoring to account for it, then, certain *religious* reasons suggest themselves to us first, and they may, perhaps, be said to amount to no fewer than half a dozen more or less distinct ones.

1. Inasmuch as the Catholics can somewhat easily procure so-called *absolution*, they are less exposed to such harassing melancholy and dark despair on account of past misdeeds as frequently are the proxima causa of suicide among the Protestants. — 2. The Catholics superstitiously assume that what takes place even in the very last hour or moment of a man's life can or does decide his future state of existence; and they are, therefore, excessively loath to die without so-called *extreme unction*, and, consequently, must more or less scrupulously incline to avoid a mode of death which (vide what will be said in §. 77) they are taught to believe a *mortal sin* which, as such, might or would do away with the meritorious effects of an entire previous even virtuous life, and which, moreover, by its very nature could not but, if attended with immediate success, debar them from receiving the said priestly vademecum as a passport to a bliss-

¹⁾ Medicinische Bemerkungen auf einer Schwelgereise, in his Medicinische Bibliothek, Göttingen, 1785, B. II, St. I, pp. 163—173.

ful Eternity. — 3. The Catholic Churches, rendered by their massive columns, their airy aisles, their mellow light, and their gorgeous paintings architecturally so grandly solemn and artistically so gently consolatory, are day by day and almost hour by hour open. Have you ever lived in a genuinely catholic country, or among unadulterated catholics? If you have, think of the worshippers who have the privilege of entering such edifices at all times for momentary devotional purposes, of sprinkling their brow with consecrated water, of listening to strains of sacred music, of muttering their griefs in Kyrie Eleisons and Ave Marias, and, last, but not least, of unburdening their hearts by *auricular confession*; and say: may we not justly presume that *sensuous worship* of this kind, rendered so convenient, fascinating, comforting, exhilarating, must tend somewhat, nay, even greatly, to scare away much of that inward agitation and perturbation which might otherwise gloomily and bodefully beckon unto self-destruction? — 4. I cannot but surmise that such unity and solidity — take this last word in any sense you like — of religious Faith as characterize Catholicism, when compared with Protestantism, and more particularly the Protestantism of our own sect-overrun and sect-ridden land, are oftentimes merely external and imaginary; but, nevertheless, they must, methinks, needs contribute largely, and more especially among the lower, uneducated, ignorant classes of the community, to keep down pretty effectually all those doubts, remove all those dissensions, and render many of those vagaries impossible which are frequently calculated to excite discontent with life, and not infrequently brood out a sort of hatred of life. — 5. Also in the *index expurgatorius* itself, stupid, unjust, contemptible though it be in most respects, Catholicism might be affirmed to possess a negative and mechanical advantage over Protestantism as regards the matter into which we are enquiring. The said institute, namely, excludes, from the reach of the mass of the people at all events, all publications of a so-called infidel or dangerous tendency. viz. infidel and dangerous as viewed from the pontifical-ecclesiastical standing-point, and among such publications very many which, being in spirit deistical and sceptical, or in tone scoffing and frivolous, certainly may exercise an unsettling influence, i. e. incite to such intellectual follies or social transgressions as generally precede, and frequently lead to, suicide; whereas before the Protestant reader any and every publication lies open, though it be, perchance, of such

sort as to induce him to view life with indifference, or as even to tempt him to cast it away with contempt. — 6. Finally, the unconditionally severe verdicts of most of the Fathers and the absolutely condemnatory decrees of the *Canonists* are considered as still binding upon the Priests who therefore occasionally re-echo them from their Pulpits and in their Confessionals, and still abide by them in the matter of sepulture with something like consistent strictness, thus upholding among the people a notion and feeling of the value and importance of the ecclesiastical solemnities of a christian burial, whereas, on the contrary, as we shall learn in §. 77, Protestant countries have, the longer the more, inclined to lessen and remove all real ignominy and punishment, as far as laws and rites are concerned, in the case of suicide, and, consequently, to treat it, if not exactly in theory, yet at all events in practice, with either pure compassion or even sheer indifference.

Thus then, if I be not mistaken in this attempt at enumerating the principal more or less powerful anti-suicidal causes inherent in Catholicism, to which I might, perhaps, have added also its numerous *public institutions* and *asylums* for almost every imaginable physical or mental privation, ailment, misfortune, we plainly discern that many of its peculiar elements are of a nature to do victorious battle against the one misdeed on which we are now engaged.¹⁾ Altogether, Catholicism in the aggregate cannot be denied the possession of much of what is *prudently* so calculated and organized as to meet the wants and calm the passions of men: whence, indeed, its popularity and its continuing and, I sadly fear, ever reviving and again encreasing successful propaganda. But, of course, I have been arguing only in reference to the one act, self-slaughter; for e. g. murder is, doubtless, far more frequent in arch-catholic than in wholly Protestant countries (let us think, for instance, of Spain and Ireland); and, of course, if we had to choose between Catholicism and few suicides and Protestantism and many suicides, we should without one single moment's hesitation decide in favor of the latter alternative.

We must, however, in the second place, not burden the whole of this matter by any means on the great Protest which was made

¹⁾ By the by, where Catholicism is somewhat loosening its hold, e. g. now-a-days in *Sardinia*, suicide, at least in *Turin* and *Genoa*, is becoming pretty frequent, as I learn from the *Newspapers*.

and carried into effect in the 16th century; for, doubtless, in those Southern countries of Europe, where Catholicism has chiefly, and in its most unadulterated character, remained the faith of the sovereigns and peoples, e. g. Italy, Spain, Portugal, *climatic* influences, and what therewith somewhat necessarily connects itself, e. g. *diet*, certainly ought not to be entirely lost sight of, a remark which has often been made, but, perhaps, in too off-hand and generalizing a manner.

In Italy, for instance, speaking quite in general, the sky shines serenely, the atmosphere is mellow, the thermometer and barometer are but little liable to sudden rise or fall, and a profuse vegetation exhibits its hues and scatters its fragrance. There, then, the mind, heart, imagination of man seem, as it were, invited to „il delicioso far niente“, nor is the human body called upon for over-tasked toil and light viands and exhilarating beverages, by Nature supplied on the spot in needful plenty and comparative cheapness, operate cheerfully on the physical and mental frame: so that, upon the whole, I can easily persuade myself that *there* Hope quickly erects her pleasantly diverting aerial bridge, and an illusive Fata Morgana reveals at a distance actualities in softened phantom-forms.

In northern European lands, on the contrary, where Protestantism, *and partly on this very account*, has more especially pitched its tent, the air is bleaker, the atmosphere more variable, Nature less friendly and less profuse, and man is endowed with a *hardier* physical frame and a sterner moral organism; for he must wage a fiercer war with the elements, win subsistence on harder terms, and, upon the whole, take life more in earnest, and, therefore, also reason more deeply, judge more solidly, determine more intensely. A natural and necessary reaction of all this would seem to me to be an occasional or even a frequent sinking into a more or less profound melancholy which its climatic affinities, as it were, mists and gloom, rain and clouds, may help to engender and foster; and, no doubt, suicide is a frequent fruit of melancholy, or of something kindred to melancholy. Moreover, suicide, if not committed in madness, argues a considerable measure of vigor of will and — at least amid christian influences — of such dogged courage as we are wont to connect with coldish blood: whence, by the by, upon the whole in modern times a far larger proportion of suicides among men than among women. How much the comparatively far greater consumption of

heavy animal food and *stimulating* brewed or distilled potions, *supplied and in part necessitated by the climate itself*, in Northern countries has to do with what physicians call conveying „bilious and melancholic juices“ into the system, or, disposing to a „choleric temperament“, I shall gladly, because of my utter ignorance touching the effects of beef and mutton, beer and alkohol, leave physicians to discuss and decide. —

Having premised these general reflections, I will now enter upon some few particulars which concern *ourselves* more immediately.

We saw already in §. 13 that suicide has been stated to be more frequent in England since the 17th century than in any other European country, i. e. *since* the Reformation in one of the most *Protestant* lands, which last remark I make with especial reference to what was said at the commencement of this §. — Firstly, then, as regards the fact itself.

In the first half of the 18th century, when the Piedmontese Passerani wrote his defence of suicide with the avowed object of *pleasing the English* (vide p. 193 of §. 74), the French poet Des-touches who had resided a considerable time in England, penned an epigrammatic epitaph on John Bull *in the aggregate* whom he supposes to have suicidally entombed himself, because he had become tired of — dressing and undressing himself day by day.¹⁾

„Ci-gît Jean Rosbif, Ecuyer,
Qui se pendit pour se desennuyer.“

At about the same period, the Swiss writer Muralt²⁾ says what follows. „Au reste, vous sçavez que les Anglois se donnent la Mort aussi facilement qu'ils la reçoivent: il n'est point rare d'entendre parler ici de personnes de l'un et de l'autre Sexe qui se dépêchent, comme ils disent, le plus souvent pour de raisons qui nous paroîtroient une bagatelle.“ — Somewhat later in the 18th century, Voltaire in those several Essays of his which we quoted in §. 18, treats us to any quantity of narratives about English suicides in his day, some of which (e. g. that of the Honorable Mr. Damer, Richard and Bridget Smith are fully authentic), others of which, however, seem to me to wear the appearance of exaggeration or fabrication; for, since this sceptic was wont to prefer being amusing to being scru-

¹⁾ Epigrammes sur divers sujets, nr. 70, Oeuvres, edit. 1755, T. IV, p. 456.

²⁾ Lettres sur les Anglois et les Français, vide pp. 106—113 of the edit. 1728.

Ritson's extremely feeble and confused History of the Celts and Gaëls, more especially the numerous notes in the latter work, by way of discerning quickly that already under the sway of *Drauidism* suicide was held on our shores to be lawful and heroic. And the self-inflicted death (according to Tacitus; for Dio Cassius, lib. 62. c. 12, ascribes to her a natural death) of the ancient British Queen Boadicea or Bunducia might lead us to infer that such a theory was at all events occasionally put into practice. Again, from Holinshed's Chronicle, we ascertain that in the 9th cent. or thereabouts sundry very notable persons in Scotland died suicidally, e. g. King Donald, the rebel Macdonald, Macbeth's consort, touching which latter *vide* also Shakspeare's tragedy. Moreover, the somewhat numerous canonical and civil laws against suicide (*vide* §. 77) which were enacted on English soil from the 7th to the 10th cent. etc. would seem to pre-suppose the casual commission of the said action in England at those periods. And, finally, as regards the 14th cent., we will not forget that sundry historians relate that anno 1400 King Richard the Second starved himself to death in his prison. — But, why such details here? Answer: because various continental writers have not scrupled to affirm (their authorities they have not given, and the reasons they assign are very absurd) that suicide was *unknown!!* in England before the battle of Agincourt,¹⁾ i. e. anno 1415, or even before the siege of the Dutch fortress of Fuirde,²⁾ i. e. in the middle of the 16th century.

But, though rejecting such assertions as simply ludicrous, we will take an opportunity of using them as a substratum for argument against what Montesquieu (*vide* §. 13), and many others after him, have maintained, viz. that the *climate* of England bears the chief and all but sole guilt of the predisposition of the English to self-slaughter. We'll say our say on this matter in a few brief sentences. 1. It is, in general, a somewhat hazardous matter to ascribe the predilection for and prevalence of suicide chiefly or solely to climatic influences. For instance, suicide was a most common occurrence among the Romans in the 1st cent. a. C. and in the 1st p. C., whereas it had been a comparatively rare occurrence in e. g. the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th centuries a. C. But, surely, though we would

¹⁾ Thus e. g. Falret on p. 25 of the work quoted in §. 13. ²⁾ Thus e. g. an anonymous Frenchman to whose book allusion will presently be made.

admit that the climate of Italy is not now as it was in those ages, we can scarcely imagine that it can have undergone any essential change between the days of the Kings and those of the Triumvirs or first Caesars. — 2. Unquestionably, suicide did not become immoderately and notoriously characteristic of the English until the 17th and 18th centuries; but who would be so foolish as to undertake to prove, or would even to venture to conjecture, that some great climatic change had befallen our land in the 16th or the 15th century? — 3. Nor is England now, nor was England in the 18th and 17th centuries characterized by a climate altogether *sui generis*: humidity, fogs, gloom, and whatsoever else has been usually pronounced its suicide-engendering or suicide-favoring influences, are common equally, if I mistake not, to several other European countries, e. g. Holland, Norway. As regards the latter country, I may affirm from such general reading as I indulged in, when travelling there, that the Norwegians are anything but addicted to suicide; and as regards the former country, which I have never visited, everything I have read about it bears direct testimony that the Dutch are, if anything, singularly free from the predisposition to, or the commission of, suicide. Of course, one might here urge the extreme primitiveness of the Norwegians, and the temperamental phlegma of the Dutch; but this would be at present beside our question which turns solely on the power of climatic peculiarities. — 4. Granted, and most willingly, that e. g. Italians, Frenchmen etc. do not like our English climate over-much, and that it generally does not in any respect agree with them over-well — the reasons are obvious — nay, that, even if it do not damage their physical health, it yet materially affects their spirits; but, let us not forget that our present concernment does not in the least lie with its effects, traceable or imaginary, upon *foreigners*, but rather simply and solely with its natural and necessary effects upon the *natives*. Granting, also, that scrofula, consumption, rheumatism, gout, listlessness, melancholy and even insanity are to be found among us pretty frequently, and not only in individuals, but in entire families and successive generations, so that many of us year by year have to seek, temporarily or permanently, relief by fleeing to other climates, milder, more settled, sunnier ones: pray, supposing the said physical and mental diseases to be at home among the English in immoderate proportion in comparison with the inhabitants of other

European countries — surely, and for the very reason above assigned, the climate alone cannot be held responsible for them, and, consequently, can just as little be held responsible for that self-destruction to which the one or the other of them may predispose, incite, conduct, impel the sufferer. I do not exactly know, whether the said diseases really be at home among the English in *immoderate* proportion in comparison with the inhabitants of other European countries; but, two things I do know, and right well too. The first of them is this: taking the English *collectively*, the climate cannot have disagreed with them to any mentionable extent, since it has allowed them to become, and indeed has in no small measure contributed to their becoming, a race vigorous, gifted, well-formed, energetic, thriving, attached to hearth and home, beyond almost every other modern people. And the second is this: having inspected and compared several Statistical Tables in conjunction with Meteorological Minutes I have fully satisfied myself that neither *seasons* nor *months*, neither *winds* nor *weathers* decide by any means materially or methodically on the commission of suicide in England, or anywhere else. It is a fallacy and a fiction, therefore, to make e. g. our *November* figure specifically as „the month when Englishmen hang or drown themselves“; for, the said inspection and comparison have convinced me that suicide is *not* most frequently committed, when the mists and rains of November thicken the atmosphere or darken the sky, or, when the autumnal leaves wither and drop, or, when a snowy shroud lies spread over the dreary landscape: on the contrary, the flowers that gaily blossom in Spring and the sun that brightly shines in Summer — it fully as often has to gaze on a suicidal corpse, they fully as often have to deck a suicide's grave. — No! we would, in our own way, still incline to look for the seat and cause of suicide in something different, in something less external or mechanical, accidental or accessory, in something more internal and independent, more self-evoked and therefore more guilty, and cannot hesitate long about subscribing to the truth of the following lines, with which Young, when treating of our very subject, indignantly apostrophises (N. T., V, 450—454) his fellow-countrymen:

„Blame not thy clime, nor chide the distant sun;
The sun is innocent, thy clime absolv'd.
Immoral climes kind nature never made.

The cause I sing, in Eden might prevail,
And proves it is thy folly, not thy fate."

Blumenbach (vide the previously mentioned essay of his) anno 1785 examined a collection of our (Metropolitan) Bills of Mortality, ranging over 102 years, viz. from 1657—1758, and the result he communicates was this: the greatest number of suicides (viz. 65) in *London* in the course of the said years occurred anno 1786. Again, Prince, writing in the year 1709, laments (vide his already quoted sermon) that anno 1707 thirty seven persons had destroyed themselves in and „around“ *London*, which number he considers larger than in previous years; and on the same occasion he gives it as his opinion that suicide was rapidly increasing. — It is self-evident that nothing very accurate or certain can be gleaned from suchlike statements. Bills of Mortality, among ourselves at least, were in those times at all events scarcely particularly authentic documents on matters of this description, whatever they may in our own days have become. (Q. are they now much better? For NB. our national Sanitary Boards etc. are a somewhat recent, and probably also a somewhat imperfect, organization). Many persons may from neglect or purposely have been omitted, many specified as having been merely „found drowned“ who had drowned themselves, many described euphemistically as having „died suddenly“ who had dispatched themselves, etc. etc., so that we might justly consider ourselves fully warranted in assuming that the figures which are therein given were *far below the mark*; and, indeed, some little reflection and comparison would, I doubt not, bear out the assumption just alluded to as not by any means devoid of foundation. Furthermore, no parallel between *then* and *now* with respect to the proportion of suicides could possibly be instituted, unless we knew exactly how many inhabitants *London* itself could boast of at the periods under mention, and how far its environs extended, and in what relation metropolitan suicide stood to suicide committed in the provincial towns and the rural districts. We may and must suppose that, as it is the case with capitals and populous cities in general, where luxury, dissipation, disease, excitement, vicissitudes *more especially* exist, suicide occurred in a very considerably greater proportion in *London* than in any other part of *England*; and should, as far as I can discern, not be going far wrong, were we to arrive at this conclusion: as far as the years intervening between 1657

and 1758 are concerned, suicide was among ourselves at its height *about the middle of the eighteenth century*.

And, if we were to begin again with the year 1759 and proceed to the year 1855, what tale should we have to tell?

A certain Dr. Burrows,¹⁾ writing in the year 1820, would fain lead us to believe that Paris, Berlin and Copenhagen have been in the first quarter of the present century far more notorious for suicide than London. But, the *extremely meagre and defective* statistical information which he has brought to bear on the subject is most assuredly not of a kind that would warrant us in laying any such „flattering unction“ to our national soul. Let „the Times“ stand forth with its almost daily intelligence on this matter as accredited and popular witness! Nevertheless, we evidently did begin already towards the end of the last century to lose gradually our unenviable and marked pre-eminence on the score of suicide; but, unless I be sadly mistaken, not because suicide has been *gradually decreasing* in England, or has at this moment the slightest appearance of doing so, but — because it has, during the last hundred years, been *increasing fearfully* in other European countries. —

Here a very few details, not by way of demonstration which I shall not attempt, but merely by way of illustration which might seem needful.

(France, Paris.) A testimony out of the year 1787. „Suicide is not a characteristic feature of the Britons. This is a very unfounded prejudice, though universally prevalent in Europe. It is true, occurrences of this kind are very frequent in England; but in Paris, no doubt, just as many persons destroy themselves as in London, although it does not become so generally known there as here.“ Thus Archenholz,²⁾ an intelligent and a well-informed German traveller who had resided both in London and Paris. A testimony out of the year 1828. „In Lyons suicide is said to be of late more frequent than in London and Paris.“ Thus Heyfelder³⁾ who had made very careful enquiries into our topic, for medico-juridical purposes. A testimony out of the year 1854. „In the 27 years from 1826—1852 the number of suicides in France amounted

¹⁾ An enquiry into certain errors relative to insanity, pp. 42, 43 of Heinroth's German translation. ²⁾ England und Italien, zweite Aufl., Th. III, p. 127 ff. ³⁾ Der Selbstmord in arztel, gerichtlicher und medicinisch-polizeilicher Beziehung, p. 5 ff.

on the whole to 17,418: from 1826—1830 fewer than 2000 must be assigned to each year, from 1831—1844, with two exceptions, between 2000 and 3000, and from 1845—1852 more than 3000, the last year (1852) numbering the most, viz. 3674.¹⁾

(Russia, St. Petersburg.) I have never seen M. Dumas' *essai sur le suicide* which was published more than half a century ago; but I remember having somewhere read that he therein states that the Russian peasantry, or some one Russian peasant, in the vicinity of Kasan would scarcely believe that such a thing as suicide ever did or could occur. I will not urge that such incredulity would imply utter ignorance of the tenets and doings of the Raskolniks (vide §. 66), and even of still more ancient Slavonic history,²⁾ but let it pass for what little it may prove in favor of the non-occurrence of suicide among the Russian serfs at the period and in the district alluded to. Indeed, Schubert, writing anno 1823, similarly assures us³⁾ that in the parish of Stöde, a very primitive small community in North Western Sweden, „no case of suicide had ever occurred.“ But, whatever may be the state of the case among the genuine Slavonic inhabitants in the other portions of the Czar's dominions, as regards the mixed population of the Capital the following authentic data (vide the sources as given by Heyfelder l. c.) lie before us. In St. Petersburg only 94 cases of suicide occurred from 1808—1811, whereas 986 occurred anno 1823, 1069 anno 1824, 1066 anno 1825, 966 anno 1826, and 1176 anno 1827.

(Prussia, Berlin.) Ever since about the last decennary or two of the past century almost every German writer on suicide has commenced by deploring the increasing frequency of the commission of suicide in his particular district; we, however, will be content with selecting from out of the numerous larger and smaller German Territories the Prussian Kingdom and its Capital. In the five years from 1818—1822 inclusive there occurred, according to authentic official records,⁴⁾ in the Prussian Dominions 3862 cases of successful and undoubted suicide, and, whilst 650 anno 1818, 859 anno 1822, and in the same five years in Berlin itself 280 cases.

¹⁾ *Augsb. Allgem. Zeitung*, Nummer 199, Julius 18, 1854, p. 3175, on the basis of the French official documents. ²⁾ Vide e. g. B. I, pp. 12, 101 of *Strahl's Geschichte des Russischen Staates*. ³⁾ *Reise durch Schweden, Norwegen, Lappland u. s. w. in den Jahren 1817—1820*, B. II, p. 478. ⁴⁾ Given on pp. 13, 16 of Casper's work quoted in §. 13. Vide also *Augsb. A. Zeitung*, Juli 19, 1855.

Is this little not quite enough, aye, more than enough, to show that almost everywhere — nay, I might, perhaps, omit the qualifying adverb — on the European Continent (as well as among ourselves) suicide is becoming the longer the more frequent? Precedence in the particular may still belong to us, or may not: what boots national contention about so melancholy a topic? At all events, there is „a beam in our own eye“, whether the beam in our continent „brethren's“ eye be larger or less large.

And, as to the *causes* of this effect, they would, I ween, be found to be everywhere in *general* essentially the same, e. g. luxury, drunkenness, gambling, dissipation, disappointment, remorse, poverty, ruin, i. e. moral, social, politico-economical phenomena incomparably and infinitely more than any mere climatic influences or dietetic peculiarities. But, inasmuch as I have in previous §§ more than once already, and at considerable length, enumerated, developed, commented on, the principal and most common causes, I will embrace this opportunity of noticing a certain cause which a certain Frenchman has thought proper to adduce as operating not a little pre-suicidally among ourselves, since — and we thus return to the point from which we started in this § — the said cause very signally and *quite characteristically* belongs to our English form of *Protestantism*.

The Q. R., Vol. XV, pp. 537, 546 of an article „Works on England“, to which same article I alluded already in §. 11, mentions the following book which, however, I have not been so fortunate as to procure: „Londres, la Cour et les Provinces d'Angleterre, d'Ecosse et d'Irlande, ou Esprit, Moeurs, Coutumes, Habitudes Privées des Habitans de la Grande Bretagne. 2 vols. 1816.“, — and criticizes it thus: „it is an account of English manners, written by a man who never was in England; — some merit, however, is due to him on the score of industry, for having collected anecdotes and jests out of number, and thereby enriched his own language with apothegms from the work of that great English grammarian, Master Dyche, and with good things culled from the Collectanea of Mr. Joseph Miller, of facetious memory“; likewise informs us that the said anonymous Frenchman adduces as one of the chief causes why „suicide has become among us the national form of madness“ *our method of observing Sunday after the Judaical manner*, and proposes as one of his most promising anti-suicidal specifics that „balls and spec-

tacles should be allowed of on Sundays"; for „alors la fureur du suicide serait arrêté." The Quarterly reviewer has not condescended to reply to this attack on our national Sabbathism; had he done so, he would, we cannot for a moment doubt, have repudiated it with contempt and derision as a piece of shallow-pated Gallic impiety. Therefore, we will, without feeling this matter to be a condescension at all on our part, take up the question, and even endeavor to show that, perhaps, after all there was and remains a considerable portion of sense and justice in yon Frenchman's insinuation and proposition. And, as I have formed my own opinion without rashness, I'll endeavor to state it without harshness.

Sabbath, i. e. *rest*. — Surely, one day of rest, whether one day in seven, or in eight, or in ten (as the French Revolutionists proposed), or in fourteen (as the ancient Christian sect in Asia Minor, the Quartodecimani, maintained to have been enjoined by Saint John to do, vide Sokrates, H. E. V, 22) — must be conceived rather as a favor granted than as a task imposed, and was more particularly a boon in a hot Eastern climate, and among a people who considered Slavery lawful, a blessing, not a burden, unto man as well as unto beast. „Any manner of *work*", therefore, i. e. manual and commercial labor, was the thing originally interdicted among the Hebrews; and, no doubt, religious worship was in *part* the thing to be substituted, and religious worship itself was in the primitive ages of Judaism, as it is among all partially educated peoples, something more or less sensuous, ceremonial, even, as we might say, a species of exciting and refreshing occupation. We have here nothing to do with the pre-decalogic origin of the Jewish sabbath, with the existence of a similar Egyptian institute, or with the mystical allusion to the Creation of the world: we are now dealing only with the Jewish lawgiver's paternally exhortatory reminder „remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy", and with his absolutely categorical „on it thou shalt do no manner of work"; — in connexion with which last word we too wonder with the youthful questioner in Kingsley's glorious life-novel (Alton Locke, vol. I, p. 10), by what strange *ascetic perversion* certain English people had come to read „on it thou shalt take no manner of amusement, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter", etc. For, methinks, even the words of the Mosaic decalogue themselves do not by any means imply that *beside* and *after* the worship I have above alluded to *rational recreation*,

harmless amusement should not be allowed. No doubt, Phariseism hypocritical, formal, hollow, degrading, enslaving, in the later, degenerate ages of Mosaism interpreted them pretty much as our zealous-hearted, but narrow-minded, Puritans did, and as our pig-headed Lord Robert Grosvenors and their full-mouthed Exeter Hall clique do; but Jesus and Paul (vide e. g. Matth. XII, 11, 13; Mark III 1—4; Luke VI, 6—10, XIII, 10—17; XIV, 1—5; Col. II, 16, 17; Romans XIV, 5, 7) unquestionably opposed and rebutted such Pharisaic misinterpretation, even on Jewish grounds, and one may verily be singularly bigoted and dull, if one would undertake to demonstrate that *Christism*, i. e. the spirit of the Gospel narrative and the tenor of the Apostolic epistles, ever meant, or by any divine or human possibility could mean, to revive, perpetuate, prescribe, enforce Pharisaic Judaism in this particular. Thence, indeed the primitive and mediaeval christians showed by their laws and practices (vide Fathers, Synods, Councils) that a Sunday à la St. Andrew Agnew and Sir Robert Harry Inglis was *not* one of the articles of faith; thence, indeed, the wisest and noblest of the Reformers (vide Luther, Zwingli) proved that they had no sympathy with any Puritanical Sabbathism; thence, all Continental Protestants as well as Catholics have never ceased to regard our present English (Scotch, Anglo-American) Judaico-Christian-Sabbath-Sunday as „objectively incorrect“¹⁾ (vide the travels of any German or Frenchman you may think proper to fix on). Nay, even the most able and liberal of our living Prelates (Thirlwall and Whately? Their names are not expressly mentioned by my authority,²⁾ who gives their respective dicta; but nobody who knows anything about our present occupants of the Episcopal Bench can doubt my having guessed correctly) ventured to teach something very similar; and Paley himself, though he devoted three entire chapters³⁾ to the matter, under the head of „Duties towards God“, could at last only take refuge — shrewdly, but accommodatingly — in the conclusion that, our particular government having once for all instituted the matter, we as subjects are in duty bound to yield willing obedience.

¹⁾ This word I borrow from Olshausen's Commentary on the Romans, p. 408 of the English translation. Of course, the English translator could not stomach the matter, and refers the reader to some Anglican clergyman's book on „Fasts and Fasting“ for an antidote! But, methinks, the deep-minded and devout-hearted German divine was *perfectly* in the right. ²⁾ Quarterly Review, 1849, p. 175. ³⁾ Moral Philosophy, Book V, chapters 6, 7, 8.

Instituted! Aye, but *since when?* Not exactly time immemorial, so that antiquity might be supposed to have hallowed the institution as a part and parcel of our national history. No! if we except the efforts of the weak archbishop Cranmer under the reign of the pious Boy-king Edward VI, we are indebted for our present characteristic manner of observing „the Lord's Day“, as we are fond of calling it in the most pregnant and solemn sense which the term (Revel. I, 10) can possibly admit of, to the English and Scotch Presbyterians and Independents in the times of Charles I and Oliver Cromwell who were, I humbly presume, inspired in the process far more by controversial hostility against Catholicism than by profound exegetical lore. All honor to their personal earnestness and devoutness in comparison with the mere jesuitical equivocations and sentimental nambypambyism of the majority of their antagonists; but — enlightened theologians or liberal-minded magistrates they were most certainly not: and, generally speaking, we English of the 19th century are not specially inclined in other matters to revere their memory, or to accept their legacies.

This little in point of theory and history; but what is more especially of interest and moment to us now, relates to the *practical effects* of our unique law and custom touching the hallowing of the Sunday upon our national character in general and upon our reputed predisposition to suicide in particular.

We have rid ourselves, and very wisely so, of the many feast-days and holidays which still prevail in Catholic countries and, in part, in those Continental countries whose population is mixed, partly protestant and partly catholic. Consequently, a day of respite and release from oppressive confinement and mechanical drudgery is all the more desirable and requisite for the many hundreds of thousands of our population who, during six days of each week, labor as tradesmen, shopmen, factory-slaves, mining-workmen, milliners, sempstresses, clerks, apprentices, etc. Of course, nobody would reasonably object also to such persons' going, *if they see the necessity or feel the inclination*, to Church or Chapel *once* on a Sunday, to their listening to some instructive discourse, hearing some genial psalmody, joining in some act of edifying public worship. But, since there is any amount of chattering among us about self-government, liberty of conscience, etc., I for one should very much like to know how we rhyme with the said self-government, liberty of conscience etc.

the very undeniable fact that laws and customs, bribes and threats seem almost to *compel* every man and woman, boy and girl to attend every Sunday some place of worship? If clergymen preach sermons worth hearing, the many will of their own accord come to hear them; if the body ecclesiastic render worship suitable to the common spiritual wants of our nature, the many will not abuse themselves; but, that the many should go to Church or Chapel to be *ennuyéd* by priestly dullness or *snubbed* by worldly pomp is somewhat too much to expect, is rather more than any reasonable being ought to desire. Supposing that NN derives more genuine enlightenment and edification from reading, thinking, writing, conversing at home, what is that to the pastor of the parish flock? Supposing that NN feels the necessity of rural air and exercise, of cheering scenery or mirthful recreation, and does not incline to spend any portion of his day of rest between the walls of a temple made of brick or stone, what, again, is that to the pastor of the parish flock? Oh! but the said pastor is his parish-flock's *spiritual* guide without whose singular sabbathical tuition they will not be able to find and secure Truth, Wisdom, Christ, God? Well and good — with sundry provisos however. First of all, it were advisable and somewhat needful, methinks, that the flock should be certified that their pastor himself had really found, or even ever earnestly tried and meant to find, Virtue, Salvation, Christ, God. And his certificate? The only valid one would consist in his *temper, feelings, insights, actions*, and not by any means in his words which may be empty and barren as the wind, though they should rush and roar as it sometimes does. Now, I beg leave to remark that close personal contact with those gentlemen who are by Act of Parliament styled „reverend“ must make every sensible and serious person most heartily *despise* a very considerable number of them, whether we look at their disgraceful College antecedents, or at their mean and grovelling worldly conceits and cupidities, or at their thorough mental incapacity, or at their secret unbelief. Who, then, would so far lower and mock himself as to consider suchlike men as *spiritual guides*? What earthly right have such „reverend“ gentlemen to expect that man or woman, youth or maid should come into their Temples to be bored and disgusted by long-winded exhibitions of hypocrisy or hackneyed displays of ignorance? Come once, twice or even thrice, and leave behind them sensible books, rational con-

verse, green fields and fresh air, until the Sunday be fairly over, and they have to begin to think again of the Monday with its toils and cares and confinement? For my own part, I should say that the „empty benches“ are at all times by far the most suitable audience for suchlike pulpit-treaders, though they, as before said, be legally nicknamed „reverend“.

However, there are in our land, thank God! also a pretty considerable number of intelligent and sincere and noble clergymen of every denomination, men truly called and well-fitted to be „Priests of God and Ambassadors of Christ“, and happy are the many who look up to them with reverence and listen to them for guidance. Yea, and when and where such a pastor is to be met with, his parishioners, high and low, young and old, will scarcely ever fail to come and be instructed, admonished, warned, comforted by his sabbathical ministrations, to come of their own free will and choice, to come — and go away influenced and strengthened for Good.

But, even in reference to *them*, surely *once* is enough for all mental and moral purposes; — and that *once*, — and a much *shorter* once it ought to be than our Liturgy allows it to be! — being over, what is to prevent man or woman, boy or girl from seeking harmless recreation in excursions, public gardens, picture galleries, museums, news-rooms, aye, and, if you approve of them *at all*, i. e. on any day whatsoever, also even in concerts and theatres? If we but keep *ourselves* holy, the day will be hallowed too, though at a concert or in a theatre; and, if you be of opinion that concerts and theatres are in and by themselves unhallowed and unhallowing, why do you frequent them on Mondays or Saturdays? — On the *Continent* even English clergymen often frequent *both* on Sundays!

If — and surely Lord Robert Grosvenor would not incline to question the high authority from which the dictum proceeded — „the Sabbath be made for man, and not man for the Sabbath“ — it follows that every person — provided, of course, he do not transgress any moral law — should be at liberty to make such use of the Sunday as he knows and feels to be most conducive to his physical, mental and spiritual health: and of this matter he himself is at all times the most competent judge. Whatsoever invigorates the body, enlightens the mind, ennobles the heart, calms and subdues the passions, purifies the feelings, exalts the imagination cannot be of Evil on a Sunday: therefore, for instance, neither studious pur-

suits nor innocent recreations. And, on the other hand, who that knows our national character and social state can venture to deny that our habitual dependence on, our morbid submission to, prolonged, reiterated ghostly ministrations have helped to an incalculable extent to render us parson-ridden beyond any other Protestant people, to hurl us into endless, often soul-barrowing, dogmatic controversies, to engender among us sanctimonious, often soul-misleading, formalisms, and to make sickly, often demoralized, hypocrites, and melancholic, often half-mad, ranters of but too many among us? It is thus in a most immediate manner that our very Sabbathism, instead of sustaining our energies, lulling our cares, sweetening our toils, softening our asperities, cheering our spirits, brightening our lives, often merely bewilders and confuses, begets an unhealthy excitement or an unhinging ennui; and it is thus that in a mediate manner the sombre silence and tedious monotony of the said Sabbathism occasionally do call forth, in the reflective and susceptible, disrelish of life, mental disease, and — as finale — suicide. — Therefore, as it seems to me, yon anonymous Frenchman was not altogether in the wrong, when he threw out the hint above mentioned; and I have emboldened myself, by way of accounting for his dictum, to apologize for it, though I must apprehend that the last two or three pages will give sore offence to some of my clerical acquaintances, if they should chance to peruse them. But, should what I just now penned even estrange every one of them from me, I would not strike out or soften a single word to win their friendship back again; for, whilst I am writing, my inmost soul is disgusted at the equally barbarous and iniquitous Parliamentary Grosvenorian tyrannical spiritual buffooneries which were intended to render Sunday in England *still more* dreary and weary, *still more* „stale, flat, and unprofitable“ to the *poorer* and *lower*, the *working* and *worked*, classes, many, of whom have had their heads battered in Hyde Park on a *Sunday* by the truncheons of the Police, because they, and very naturally and *very justly* so, took upon themselves to remind the *wealthy* and the *titled* members of our community that, perchance, the driving in one's own Carriage and frequenting West End Clubs were also „sabbath-breaking“ proceedings! And upon such sorry Grosvenorian humbug the valuable time of our Representatives had to be wasted, whilst, in part at least through our governmental blunderings, incapacities, laissez-faires, and nepotisms, our brave and devoted common

soldiers were being decimated in the Crimea, and new burdens had to be laid upon the poor man's hard earnings!! — — —

The allusion to the Crimea reminds me of a circumstance which is, perhaps, deserving of special notice, ere we cease to speak of the occurrence of suicide in post-reformatorial times: I mean the disproportionate frequency, as compared with the middle ages, of suicide in the army, among the soldiers more particularly, but, albeit in a considerably limited measure, among the officers also. To the former, however, viz. the soldiers, the following remarks shall be confined.

To the extreme number of suicides among the troops of Frederick the Great attention was already drawn on p. 39 of §. 6; and I have likewise in the one or the other book found the frequency of suicide among the Austrian and the English soldiers adverted to. However, I will content myself with notifying this phenomenon among the French soldiers of the Republican army and the Swiss troops in foreign service, more especially in Naples and Rome, because two somewhat interesting *literary* documents have attached themselves thereto.

Bonaparte, when First Consul, issued from Paris, May 12, 1802 (le 23 Floréal an X) the following sort of Aristotelean „Ordre“. ¹⁾ Le grenadier Gobain s'est suicidé par amour; c'était d'ailleurs un très-bon sujet. C'est le second événement de cette nature qui arrive au corps depuis un mois. — Le premier consul ordonne qu'il soit mis à l'ordre de la garde: „Qu'un soldat doit savoir vaincre la douleur et la mélancolie des passions; qu'il y a autant de vrai courage à souffrir avec constance les peines de l'ame, qu'à rester fixe sur la muraille d'une batterie. — S'abandonner au chagrin sans résister, se tuer pour s'y soustraire, c'est abandonner le champ de bataille avant d'avoir vaincu.“

Anno 1841 a German, whilst deploring the frequency of suicide among the Swiss hirelings in Italian service, took occasion to write a very well-meant essay ²⁾ under the following title: „Der Selbstmord unter den in fremden Kriegsdiensten stehenden Schweizern, mit erweiterter (the meaning of this epithet has remained unclear to me) Ansicht der Selbsttödtung.“

Supposing, then, the fact itself sufficiently substantiated, we

¹⁾ Oeuvres complètes de Napoléon, Cotta's edit. 1822, T. IV, p. 362.

²⁾ Grethagen, Jahrgang 4, 1841, zweites Heft, pp. 79—89.

will pause for a few moments, and trace the cause or causes, psychological, moral, and even physiological, which, no doubt, lie near enough to every thoughtful observer.

In the greater number of our modern armies the common soldier is treated like a mere machine, drudge, slave: drilled, beaten, tyrannized over in the most pedantic, offensive, often brutal and almost unbearable manner. His officer is frequently a mere dressed-up fop or dissipated puppy, a gentleman only by the length of pedigree or of purse,¹⁾ and in his brief authority „plays most strange antics before high heaven“; and his sergeant almost quite as frequently verifies the homely proverb „set a beggar on horse-back, and he'll ride him to the Devil.“ Nevertheless, a common soldier is supposed to possess, besides physical nerve, a sort of sense of honor, military esprit de corps, etc. No wonder, then, if the vulgar and stupid indignities with which his superiors occasionally assail him, should drive him, as a point d'honneur itself, to use against himself that weapon he always carries about him, and in the management of which he is so well skilled,²⁾ since an appeal to a Court Martial for redress of his grievances might be in vain and any disobedience or self-defence would, probably, be severely visited on him as an act of insubordination, want of due respect, etc. — Indeed, the degrading and rigorous character itself of the punishments inflicted in the army for actual delinquencies, venial as well as heavy ones, must, methinks, be regarded as the cause why a soldier often prefers self-inflicted death to subjecting himself thereto. This is one phase of the matter. Another phase is the following one.

I will not speak of the fatigues, hardships, privations of military service in actual warfare (let us think e. g. of the French campaigns in Egypt and Russia) which might tend from time to time to render life a veritable burden to the common soldier, or even of that comparative indifference to life with which he must almost needs become inspired, when it pleases Sovereigns to pit their regimentalized gladiators bataillon-wise against one another in some vast arena and the individual gladiator's life becomes so precarious, and is held

¹⁾ Perhaps, the English reader will be so kind as to remember what certain British officers, *gentlemen of gentlemen in their own estimation*, called „practical joking“, about a year ago, in the case of Lieutenant Perry. ²⁾ By the by, for this very reason military suicides, like huntsmen, poachers, etc. generally employ fire-arms.

so cheap: I will rather say a few simple words on the common soldier's life in times of peace — which God grant to us soon again! Amen. In such times, then, the common soldier can scarcely be said to have any real, manly, useful occupation: mechanical drudgery, pompous parade are only a species of forced inactivity; and would his pay suffice for the maintenance of wife and child, regimental laws frequently exclude him from all self-chosen, cheering, hallowing domestic ties. Heaped and huddled barrack-life (I have seen something of it) is never a genuine home, is generally but little calculated to evoke and foster the better feelings by moralizing, humanizing regulations and influences; the frequent change of garrisons, besides the *climatic* differences and *diætic* alterations it involves, loosens the soldier's hold upon almost any and every locality, and such wandering, unsettled, comfortless mode of life but too often and naturally tempts to loose habits, love of drink, illicit amours, gaming, etc., more especially as our armies, whether got together by conscription or by recruiting, necessarily number among their hirelings many individuals of the most ignorant, demoralized, and desperate kind.

CHAPTER II. LEGISLATION.

§. 76. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In previous portions of this Treatise, we made ourselves acquainted with those ritual customs and fiscal statutes which prevailed and were valid in reference to suicide among the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews. Though, however, the institutions of Christian life and the organizations of Christian society could not but be from the very outset largely indebted to, and powerfully influenced by, the said threefold source of civilization, yet there were certain peculiarities inherent in Christianity which very explicable and naturally called forth, at a comparatively early period already, and then the longer the more decidedly, during the Middle Ages at least, a somewhat peculiar *legislatorial* position to the topic of suicide, i. e. sacerdotal measures and juridical usages which were rather antagonistic to than emanatory from those to which §§. 34. 35 and 60 introduced us.

It is true, the New Testament itself had not imparted any precepts about the mode of dealing with the dead; nevertheless, it contained indirectly not a little that might reasonably induce the believers therein to indulge in a considerable measure of reverential tenderness, when depositing the remains of their fellow-believers in a final earthly resting-place. For instance, the corpse of Jesus himself had been tended and entombed with affectionate care and honorable distinction, in fulfilment of prophecy and with divine approval, as they fondly assumed; and what had been done unto *his* body, his early followers would appear to have viewed as a sort of precedent for what each of them should, approximatively at all events, perform for the other. In a still greater degree, however, were certain tenets of the N. T. calculated to operate in a similar

direction. We know that Classical Paganism had inclined to regard the human body as a mere „prison of the soul“, and that the Jews themselves had been taught (vide e. g. Numb. XIX, 11 ff.) to consider the human corpse as „unclean“ and „defiling.“ The N. T., on the contrary, had taught not only that the body of Jesus had ascended in glorified beauty and immortality into the Heavens, or that the body of every believer in Him was to be raised again at some future period, like a seed entrusted only for a while to the dark lap of the earth, in a form pure, excellent, like even unto the varied lustre of the stars, but had laid the most pointed stress on the theorem that even in this world the human body is like unto a pilgrim-hut, by God himself erected and „wonderfully made“, in which the Holy Spirit has tabernacled, a temporary laboratory, as it were, in which an immortal soul, of divine essence, was to cultivate itself for super-terrestrial purposes, and to mature itself for eternal aims and ends. Surely, then, such a body, when its life was temporarily extinct, was worthy of reverential solicitudes and devotional solemnities!

The early Christians, then, adopting what had been — with mere exceptional cases — the universal custom of the Jews themselves, *interment*, i. e. the simple delivery to the natural process of gradual decay, not cremation, i. e. total consumption, or embalmment, i. e. entire preservation, not only carefully washed, shrouded, decked the corpse, but gave a *symbolical* name (*χοιμητηριον*, place of slumber, cf. John XI, 11, and 1 Thess. IV, 13) to its last resting-place, where, indeed, many of the living were wont to assemble from time to time to pray and to meditate; aye, even to the very grave-diggers themselves (*Kopiates*) almost clerical rank was assigned, and — at the interment various ceremonies, originally emblematical of faith and love and hope, and therefore intrinsically beautiful and not without significance, albeit they should have degenerated, in the course of ages, for many into either mere superstitious rites or mere empty forms, were performed. About these same religious ceremonies more by and by. For the present, two remarks solely, on the threshold of this Chapter. Firstly. It follows that to any withholding or curtailment of suchlike ceremonies more or less considerable importance could not but be attached, and that, when the Christian Church began to organize itself into a final Tribunal over the living and the dead, the said withholding or curtailment would be employed

as a signal instrument of penal jurisdiction, and a powerful one too, as long as the institutes of the Church as such possessed in general a firm hold on the minds of her members. Secondly. We cannot in the least wonder that — to be silent on the reminiscences of the myths and hints of classical antiquity about some manner and measure of punishment inflicted on the corpses of suicides — the opinions and decisions of the principal churchfathers in condemnation and denunciation of self-destruction should have evoked at a comparatively early period in the Christian congregations a sort of *ritual* manifestation of most marked disapproval of it.

Therefore, not only our first business in this Chapter, but our main business throughout, will lie rather with ritual prescriptions than with *fiscal* arrangements. We know, indeed, that Christianity assumed at the outset a spiritual and mystic character which induced its professors rather to forbear interfering with, and regulating, matters of property, so that whatsoever innovations proceeded from them were far less likely to be of a fiscal than of a ritual nature. Anti-suicidal fiscal laws did not step in, until worldly cupidities had commenced to entrench themselves pretty strongly in the breast of Christendom.

§. 77. LAWS AND USAGES IN CHRISTENDOM.

I. The isolated testimony of the christian historian Cassianus.

The reader is requested to recollect the case of a certain Hero which I narrated in §. 13 for a psychological purpose; for we must now briefly recur to it also for a legislative purpose, since it is, I am disposed to believe, the *first clear hint* recorded on the ritual observances of the ecclesiastical corporation, or the christian community, touching the corpse of an actual suicide. The pertinent words of Cassianus run thus. „Vix a Presbytero Abbate Paphnutio potius obtineri, ut non inter Biathanatos reputatus, etiam *memoria et oblatione pausantium* judicaretur indignus.“ The meaning whereof is, of course, that the said Hero would have been deemed and declared „*memoria et oblatione indignus*“, if the said Paphnutius had not become convinced that he ought not to be regarded as a veritable suicide; and, this is the legitimate inference, veritable suicides as such *were excluded from „memoria et oblatio.“* This took place in Egypt in the 5th century; for Cassianus himself died about anno 432. Inasmuch, now, as we have no reason whatsoever for as-

suming that the identical verdict would not have been given in the same age throughout Christendom, we will for a moment stop to enquire into the nature of the said *memoria et oblatio pausantium*: which last figurative word is, of course, taken from Apoc. XIV, 13 „that they may *rest* from their labors“, and consequently signifies simply *the departed* (saints, if you like). *Memoria* and *oblatio* would appear to have been inseparable, the one merely supplemental to the other, viz. thus: *memoria* = *commemoratio eorum in sacrificio*, and *oblatio* = *sacrificium pro eis oblatum*, i. e. on the day of the death, and on that of the *burial*, hymns, prayers, and lessons were recited, likewise on the anniversary of their death, and also on certain other fixed days; their names were read, too, during public mass (at the same time when the sacrifice was made) from tablets (so-called *ἀντιτύχα καὶ πτυχὰ*), and a species of blessing or prayer added afterwards by the officiating priest.¹⁾ — Of more special importance, in reference to what will present itself to us in later portions of the middle ages, it will be here at once to notify that not the slightest allusion is made to any indignity offered to the corpse as such, or to any separate place of interment.

II. Purely ecclesiastical, or ecclesiastico-civil, laws prior to the composition, or compilation, of the *corpus juris canonici*.

1. The Canons of the Synods of Orleans, anno 533, Braga, anno 563, and Auxerre, anno 578.

„*Oblationes defunctorum, qui in aliquo crimine fuerint interempti, recipi debere censemus, si tamen non ipsi mortem probentur propriis manibus intulisse.*“²⁾ — „*Item placuit, ut hi qui sibi ipsis aut per ferrum, aut per venenum, aut per praecipitium, aut suspendium, vel quolibet modo inferunt mortem, nulla pro illis in oblatione commemoratio fiat, neque cum psalmis ad sepulturam eorum cadavera deducantur: multi eum sibi hoc per ignorantiam usurpaverunt. Similiter et de his placuit, qui pro suis sceleribus puniuntur.*“³⁾ — *Quicumque se propria voluntate in aquam jactaverit, aut collum ligaverit, aut de arbore praecipitaverit, aut ferro percusserit, aut qualibet oc-*

¹⁾ Vide the somewhat lengthy and motley notes appended to the already quoted edition of Cassianus ad h. l.; Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book 23, ch. 3, sect. 13; and Neander's *Antiquities*, p. 155 ff. ²⁾ Concilium Aurelianense, II, Canon XV, in Mansi's *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio*, T. VIII, p. 837. ³⁾ Concilium Bracarense, II, Canon XXXIV, *ibid.* T. IX, p. 779.

casione voluntariae se morti tradiderit, istorum oblatio non recipitur.“¹⁾ — Which three preceding laws, as Canons of Synoda, may be accepted as the purest, fullest, and most authoritative instruments and manifestations of the ethical and ritual legislation of the early christian church. The third of them simply returns to what had been already enacted by the first of them; in both of these, however, the word oblatio would appear to be used in a meaning somewhat different from the one it had in the above passage of Casianus. The living, namely, considered it both an obligation and a privilege to contribute so-called altar-offerings (oblaciones, *προσφορὰς*) for the maintenance of the clergy, for the relief of the poor, for the defrayment of expenses in connexion with the church and her services, etc. Not to be allowed to make such contributions was a sort of ecclesiastical punishment; and, therefore, permission was refused to heretics, flagrant sinners, and all persons who were deemed unworthy of participating in the most sacred and solemn service and benefits of the altar. It, now, frequently happened that persons in their Wills, or in some other manner, bequeathed certain sums to be applied as altar-offerings, and thus to mediate a continued intimate connexion with the church after their deaths. (Were, perhaps, the names of donors as such *more especially* commemorated publicly by prayers and masses? Now-a-days, at least, this would, I presume, be the case). Inasmuch, then, as such bequests (oblaciones defunctorum), if made by persons who had afterwards destroyed themselves, were not to be received or accepted, this measure was tantamount to a declaration that suicides as such had not died in real visible communion with the christian church; consequently, it was — a certain sort of post mortem excommunication: and, therefore, no spiritual performances took place on their behalf at the altar for the very same reason, i. e. no masses were read for their souls, as we should now-a-days express ourselves. It is possible, though scarcely probable, that some persons, intending to commit suicide, but having a doubt about the justifiableness of the deed, and thinking to make sure work, in a fit of indiscreet devotion gave oblations to the church, in order to expiate their fault, if any there were; but it is certain that the church did what lay within her province and power to provide against any suchlike mistaken practices by simply forbidding

¹⁾ Concilium Autiosidorense, Canon XVII, *ibid.* p. 914.

the oblations of suicides to be accepted. More wisely, however, methinks, Aerius, the *heretic*, in the 4th cent. inveighed against the *entire matter* about thus.¹⁾ „For what purpose repeat ye the names of the deceased? When the living pray or distribute something, what avails that the dead? But, if the prayer of those on earth help the departed, well, then nobody need be any longer pious or benevolent: let him but procure in whatever way he can some friends, nay, should it be even whilst dying, in order that he may not suffer anything in the other world, and that the sins he has committed in life may not be punished.“ — These few remarks on the Canons of Orleans and Auxerre; and we will now comment briefly also on the Canon of Braga which not only confirms what Cassianus had mentioned, but enters somewhat minutely into other ceremonial particulars. It is clear that it was the custom in those times to bear the corpses of christians amid the singing or praying of psalms to the grave, probably also with the accompaniment of such emblematical insignia as crucifix and tapers, and to inter them, whilst the priest spoke a prayer over the grave. Such psalms and prayers, then, were to be omitted in the case of suicides. More than this is not additionally prescribed by the council-decree of Braga. — Whether, however, the „pro illis“ implies that any commemoration in oblatione would not avail the soul of a suicide? This is a question which I am not prepared to answer. What would first suggest itself is, doubtless, that the said omission of masses was to signify that the Priest considered all interference impotent, if not even wicked, it being simply his duty to let Perdition quietly take possession of the departed soul. And this is, I doubt not, the prevalent popular view of the matter. Yet, when we scrupulously weigh an early Papal utterance — Pope Leo's in the 5th century, if I remember rightly —, we might rather incline to assume that the Church did not mean to embody thereby the opinion that all such persons as she had deprived of communion with herself were also necessarily excluded from salvation. „De communione privatis, et ita defunctis. Horum causa Dei iudicio reservanda est, in cuius manu fuit, ut talium obitus non usque ad communionis remedium differretur. Nos autem quibus viventibus non communicavimus mor-

¹⁾ Vide Rössler's already mentioned work, T. VI, p. 298. The *orthodox* Epiphanius' refutation, *ibid.* p. 301, is only indirect, and very impotent.

his communicare non possumus." At least, when we consider the Catholic church decrees the same mode of dealing with such as have fallen in a tournament or duel,¹⁾ and more especially with usurers,²⁾ we cannot but incline to construe her enactments in reference to suicides somewhat charitably. „Quodsi quis eorum in (in torneamentis) mortuus fuerit, quamvis ei poscenti poenitentia (i. e. the sacraments as administered to dying persons) non negetur, ecclesiastica tamen careat sepultura." This was consistent, and anno 866 the Concilium Valentinum III, can. 12 pertinently defined a *duellist* „tanquam sui homicida et propriae mortis spontaneus appetitor", which quotation involuntarily reminds me of the Latin master in a certain self-dubbed religious English school who not very long ago showed his wit and lore by denying that duelling had anything to do with suicide, because he had never known the case of a duellist *shooting himself*! — „Ideo constitimus, quod usurarii manifesti nec ad communionem admittantur altaris (i. e. to the Lord's supper), nec Christianam, si in hoc peccato decesserint, accipiant sepulturam, sed ac oblationes eorum quisquam accipiat." The term „usurer" is very vague, we must admit; but the laws of those times frequently complain of this degrading and ruinous practice, more especially on the part of the Jews.

2. Three laws which originated between the 7th and the 10th centuries on English soil, viz. in the Poenitentiale of Theodorus who died anno 690 as archbishop of Canterbury, in the Poenitentiale of which (probably) Egbert, who died anno 767 as archbishop of York was the author, and in the Canones which were published in the 10th cent. under the reign of king Edgar.

„Si homo vexatus est a diabolo, et nescit aliquid, nisi ubique discurrere, et occidit semetipsum quacumque causa, prodest ut oratur pro eo, si ante religiosus erat. Si pro desperatione, aut pro timore aliquo, aut pro causis ignotis, Deo relinquamus hoc iudicium, et amissum sumus orare pro illo. Qui se occiderit propria voluntate, animas pro eo facere non licet, sed tantum orare et eleemosynas largiri. Si quis subita tentatione mente sua exciderit, vel per insaniam seipsum

¹⁾ Decret. Greg. IX. lib. V. tit. 13. de torneamentis. cap. 1 (anno 1179); and it is confirmed, though in other words, by the Council of Trent, de Reformatione, sessio XXV, c. 19. ²⁾ Decret. Greg. IX. lib. V. tit. 19. de usura. cap. 3. It belongs likewise to the year 1179.

occiderit, quidam pro eo missas faciunt.“¹⁾ — „Si quis seipsum occidit armis, vel aliis rebus diversis diaboli instinctu, non est permis-
sum, ut pro tali homine missa cantetur, vel cum aliqua psalmodia
corpus terrae committatur. Idem jus faciendum est illi, qui pro de-
lictorum suorum tormento vitam suam amittit.“²⁾ — „Si quis seip-
sum sponte occidat armis, vel aliqua diaboli instigatione, non est
permisum, ut pro tali homine missae cantentur, neque cum aliquo
psalmi cantu corpus terrae inseratur, neque in pura sepultura jaceat
sepultus. Idem illud judicium faciendum est ei, qui pro reatu suo
vitam suam tormentis finit, quales sunt fur, homicida, et domini pro-
ditor.“³⁾ — As to the so-called poenitentiales libri, their contents
consisted chiefly of extracts from the Canons, though not without
occasional modifications, amplifications, new fixations and additions;
and they derived their name from the circumstance that they con-
tained exclusively prescriptions concerning the procedure of the priests
towards penitents in the matter of the confession of individual sins,
of the submission to certain exercises and punishments by way of
atonement, and of re-admission into the church. — The first-men-
tioned one is said to have subsequently enjoyed the most exclusive
authority in the Latin church, because more complete and better ar-
ranged than any previous one. In it we see „oblation“ making way
for something kindred, but yet, peradventure, more formal and de-
cided, the „mass“; however, the extreme gentleness of the entire law
is palpable, nor is there in it the slightest allusion to aught pertain-
ing to either an ignominious or a distinctive funeral or burial-place.
In the second, we find a prescription about burial-rites similar to
that in the Council decree of Braga, but likewise nothing about the
place of interment. In the third, the expressions „pura sepultura“
(the original, if I recollect rightly, was Anglosaxon; but I forgot to
take notice of the vernacular epithet here employed) seems to me
somewhat vague; perhaps, however, we should be warranted in sup-
posing it to embody some reference to the place of interment, i. e.
to sainted earth, holy ground, a consecrated grave-yard. — On the
peculiar diabolocratic elements in these laws vide what has been said
already in §. 13.

¹⁾ Ancient Laws and Institutes of England, 1840, p. 308. Ibid. on p. 311
also the decree of Auxerre is quoted, with merely grammatical difference of
wording, as law. ²⁾ Wilkins' Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. I,
p. 129, lib. II, c. V. ³⁾ Ibid. p. 232, c. XV.

3. Two Franco-Germanic laws, contained in the *Capitularies* Charlemagne and Lewis the Pious, consequently originating under their respective reigns.

The first of them runs thus. „De eo qui semetipsum occidit, ac laqueo se suspendit, consideratum est ut si quis compatiens velit elemosynam dare, tribuat et orationes in psalmodiis faciat. Oblationes tamen et Missis ipsi careant. Quia incomprehensibilia sunt judicia Dei, et profunditatem consilii ejus nemo potest investigare.“ ¹⁾ The second is identical with what we have already quoted from the council of Auxerre, if we except the slightest possible verbal differences. ²⁾ — The *Capitularies* were, partly, extracted from synodal decrees, partly, however, also drawn up by the Frankish kings themselves, but then still conceded, signed, and published by the sacerdotal and temporal magnates, and, moreover, in such manner that the bishops and ecclesiastics had always the principal influence in framing them, so that all the secular laws of that period are, we may say, merely ecclesiastical ones, sanctioned by civil authority, not originally civil ones, and much less in aught infected with barbaric germs. — In the above quoted law, now, we hear a somewhat more „modest, gentle, and charitable“ chord struck, without any reference to the Devil's temptations, but with a more suitable reference to a well-known kindly and genial passage of the N. T. Nor is there in it any allusion to the place, or even to the manner of interment. But, though alms and prayers as a private matter be authorized, ceremonies and the sacrifice of the mass are forbidden.

4. Passages in *Papal Judicia* and *Epistolae* of the 8th and the 9th centuries, as also to be found in *Mansi's Conciliorum collectio*. ³⁾

Pope Gregory III all but verbally renewed anno 731 in his *Judicia* the decree of the council of Braga. „Item placuit ut hi qui sibi ipsis aut per ferrum, aut per venenum, aut per praecipitum, aut suspendium, aut quolibet modo violentiam inferunt mortis, nullus in oblatione commemorationem faciat eorum, neque cum psalmis eorum corpora ad sepulturam deportentur. Multi enim hoc sibi per ignorantiam usurparunt. Similiter et de his placuit qui pro suis sceleribus puniuntur.“ — Pope Nicholas I, having been consulted by

¹⁾ Lib. VI, §. 70. ²⁾ Lib. VII, §. 442. Both of them are contained in *Mansi*, vol. XV. ³⁾ T. XII, p. 296, canon XXXII; and T. XV, p. 431.

the Bulgarians, which nation had been converted to Christianity during his rule, whether one ought to bury a suicide, and might offer for him sacrificium, i. e. holy mass, replied that one must, indeed, bury such a one, in order that the sense of smell on the part of the living may not be offended, but that, nevertheless, in order that a salutary terror may be inspired into others „non est solito cum obsequiis more ad sepulcra ferendus“; and then proceeds to say that, if there be those who, from love of mankind, solemnly bury a suicide (ejus sepulturae obsequuntur), they appear to do so for their own gratification (sibi), not from respect for the person who has become the murderer of himself; and, finally, having given his own precept „sacrificium vero pro eo non est offerendum“, he, with palpable allusion to a passage which we discussed in §. 65, thus concludes „qui (i. e. the suicide) non solum ad mortem usque peccavit, sed et mortis sibimet interitum propinavit. Quis enim magis peccatum ad mortem facit, pro quo Joannes apostolus dicit non orandum, quam is qui *Judam imitatus* sui ipsius homicida fuisse magistro diabolo comprobatur.“ — By the by, some readers who remember the remarks I penned on pp. 42—44 of §. 65 might urge that I ought there and then already to have taken some notice of this Papal dictum of Nicholas', since I was well acquainted with his above Responsa ad Consulta Bulgarorum, when I wrote down those remarks. To tell the truth, I had intended to do so, but afterwards forgot again, so that we limited ourselves to a similar interpretation which a *Protestant* theologian had advanced. Indeed, the interpretation of ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον which we on that occasion for various reasons rejected, was in the *middle ages* anything but infrequent, as we learn e. g. from the following anti-suicidal council-decree¹⁾ enacted anno 878 under Pope John VIII. „Et si in ipsa pertinacia permanentes obierint (the mention is more particularly of „pervasores rerum ecclesiasticarum“), nemo corpora illorum cum hymnis et psalmis sepeliat, nec memoria illorum ad sacrum altare inter fideles mortuos habeatur, docente apostolo et evangelista Joanne: *Est peccatum ad mortem: pro illo non dico ut quis roget.* Peccatum enim ad mortem est perseverantia in peccato usque ad mortem. Et sacri antiquorum canones, de his qui sibi mortem voluntarie inferunt, et qui pro suis sceleribus puniuntur, sancto inspi-

¹⁾ Concilium Tricassinum (Troyes) II, in Mansi T. XVII, p. 349.

raute Spiritu decreverunt, ut cum hymnis et psalmis eorum corpora non deferantur ad sepulturam. Quorum decreta sequentes“, etc. We could not do full justice to this interpretation, from the standing-point of Catholicism, without casting a glance at the, to me at least, no less disgusting than absurd, Casuistry-engendered and Casuistry-fostering, dogma of the so-called (seven) „deadly“ sins, peccata mortalia, in contradistinction to peccata venialia, i. e. such sins as entirely exclude man from Paradise in opposition to such sins as, it is true, really offend God, but do not excite his wrath so intensely as to induce Him to refuse unto man, because of them, Salvation. To which implied wonderful insight into the Mind and Heart of God we, however, lay no claim; and, therefore, shall content ourselves with observing — what has often been observed — that, inasmuch as the subst. θάνατος in the passage under discussion evidently does not mean „physical“ death, the prep. προς cannot be supposed to indicate physical death as the temporal term, „up to which“ the said sin endures and operates („Peccatum enim ad mortem est perseverantia in peccato usque ad mortem“). Of course, also in our acceptance of the matter such enduring and operating unto the termination of physical life must be taken for granted; but this is not the point which the Apostle solely or chiefly had in view: he might be said to have implied it, but he most certainly did not express it. The catholic church, however, thought proper to fix upon certain sins as warranting and demanding *excommunication*, suicide being of the number; and, having once introduced the practice, the theory was easily established to suit it. Thus, as in many other instances, if the ecclesiastical practices had out-run strict hermeneutic principles, a scriptural warrant was subsequently somehow discovered and urged, which process was and is at all times and in all matters easy enough. But, to return: one brief remark more, ere we proceed to the corpus juris canonici. In the Judicium of Gregory III we find the „multi per ignorantiam“ etc. of the Council of Braga reiterated, and in Pope Nicholas' Responsa there is an allusion to the same circumstance, another cause, however („studio humanitatis“), being suggested. We are, therefore, somewhat involuntarily led to believe that, whatever the Church may have thought proper to fix as theory, and to enjoin as practice, the People as such, or, at least, individuals in the multitude, inclined ever and anon to deal more mercifully and considerately with the corpses of suicides, because they,

we venture to hint, themselves entertained opposite views, or cherished opposite feelings.

III. The corpus juris canonici.

We have seen in all the above laws that what we found to be the characteristics of the laws in the Justinian Code had exercised no influence whatsoever: the distinctions there specified in reference to *motive* completely vanish, nor is the *fiscal* element even so much as touched upon. The spiritual side of the action is alone dealt with, only ritual enactments are enunciated; and what may become of, or ought to be done with, a suicide's property is not made a question of the slightest concernment. Nor did that authoritative ecclesiastical code of laws (vide §. 71) of which we are now about to speak make any change in this respect. From among all the above quoted decrees, namely, that of the council of Braga alone has been received and inserted into it (viz. in the second half of the Decretum Gratiani, vide §. 71), though with some slight verbal alterations, chiefly additions, which I will for accuracy's sake at once parenthetically point out. (Before *ipsis* the *sibi* is omitted, and after *ipsis* *voluntarie* is intercalated; instead of *inferunt mortem* we find *violentam inferunt mortem*, and before *nulla* an emphatic *prorsus* is placed). Nevertheless, it is to this same passage that all catholic as well as protestant canonists refer — take up any work you like, I'll content myself with adducing old Boehmer ¹⁾ —, when they would fain, if not vindicate, yet account for, the *later penal* mode of dealing with suicidal corpses. Therefore, we must endeavor to ascertain what is really therein forbidden or permitted. — We will commence, for the benefit of the Protestant reader, this enquiry by trying to learn in what the *complete solemn* funeral rites consist according to the *rituale Romanum*; for, of course, *Protestant* usages cannot as yet demand our attention. We are told ²⁾ that, firstly, whilst the passing bell or bells toll, the priest, accompanied by the requisite ministrants, i. e. persons who carry a crucifix, holy water, the censer, wax-candles, proceeds to the house in which the corpse is laid out, and there sprinkles the latter with the holy water, the well-known psalm „de profundis“ being at the same time spoken along with

¹⁾ Institutiones Juris Canonici tum ecclesiastici tum pontificii, edit. 3, 1747, tit. 29, §. 12. p. 462. ²⁾ Vide Aschbach's (catholic) *allgemeines Kirchen-Lexikon*, 1850, s. vv. *Begräbnis* und *Bestenmessen*.

other prayers; that, secondly, the body is then, amid the chanting or rehearsing of sundry other appropriate psalms, borne either into the church or the churchyard: if into the former first, it is placed before the altar, and the funeral service is there read; if at once into the latter, the said officium defunctorum is read there, and singing, blessing, praying, sprinkling, frankincensing are repeated at the grave, which latter, should the ground not have been already consecrated, is then itself consecrated. — Thus everything is done that could assure the by-standers and survivors that the deceased is an object of reverence and affection to the church, that she employs, if not unto the last, yet at the last, all the audible and visible means at her command for ensuring unto the departed one a remembrance among the faithful here, and a lot among the blessed hereafter. For, of course, all this would be the veriest hollow sham and theatrical pantomime, if the body ecclesiastic did not assume or believe that the deceased had died in such faith, love, hope, penitence as it expects and demands from all its true members for whom it confidently anticipates ultimate salvation.

We will now measure the limitations made in the decree of the council of Braga, as adopted into the corpus juris canonici, by the above details, and put the following question: if this same council-decree enact that „those who by the sword, or by poison, or by plunging down a precipice, or by suspension (suffocation, strangulation), or in any manner whatever voluntarily (i. e. wilfully, consciously) have violently despatched themselves, are not to have any commemoration at all made for them by oblation, nor are their corpses to be followed to the grave amid the rehearsing (singing) of psalms“ — what solemnities are to be *legally* withheld from, and what privileges may still be *legally* accorded to, them? An unbiassed, unconstrained exposition of the literal import of the above words would seem to yield pretty readily the following items. a. The deductio cum psalmis ad sepulturam is interdicted; but, inasmuch as the sepultura in coemeterio could take place without such ded. c. p. ad sep., the above decree need not imply *exclusion from the churchyard*. b. The sep. in coemet. might take place without the presence of the clergy; if, however, the clergy were really intended to remain away, it was usual to specify this circumstance: therefore, the above decree does not distinctly prohibit *their presence*. c. Whenever a burial was to take place sine campanarum pulsatione, a restrictive

clause to this effect was usually added; consequently, the above decree does not necessarily involve even the *non tolling of the passing-bell*. d. Any *extraordinary*, i. e. either very late or very early, time for the taking place of the funeral is, most palpably, just as little specified in the above decree.

It is true, whilst thinking over and writing down the said four items, I have had the corpus juris canonici bodily before me, not infrequently turning over its leaves and perusing this and that passage. But, well aware of the peculiar idioms and numerous parallels that must be taken into careful consideration, when such nice and disputed technical points have to be argued and settled, if settled they really can be by aid of so intricate and unwieldy a book as the corpus juris canonici most unquestionably is, I was neither so silly nor so presumptuous as not to solicit the guidance and tuition of some scientifically educated orthodox catholic divine whose vocational pursuits had brought this entire matter within the sphere of his enquiry and research; and J. M. Jansen's German Essay, entitled „Development and critique (Bürdtigung) of the principles of the Canon Law touching the refusal of ecclesiastical interment“, published some twenty years ago in a Catholic Periodical,¹⁾ most opportunely chanced to fall into my hands. To it the reader is referred for the needful proofs of what I have given as my own impression, and also for some of the controversies which have been raised on the matter.

Well, having thus briefly stated what *presumptively* is *not* interdicted, we will now proceed to state also what *unmistakably* is interdicted — by the council-decree of Braga. a. Prohibited in the case of suicides is a rite, partly merely commemorative and therefore honorary, and partly believed to be really intercessory and propitiatory, and therefore connecting itself with some of the most tender feelings and charitable practices of the surviving members, i. e. the practice of offering up (in public, officially) prayers for them, the custom of giving, or bequeathing, money to defray the expenses of such prayers. b. Prohibited, furthermore, is the performance of psalmody, whilst the suicidal corpse was being borne to its last resting-place. — However, there are, I am fully aware, sundry other

¹⁾ Zeitschrift für Philosophie und katholische Theologie, herausgegeben von Achterfeldt, Braun, Scholz und Vogelsang, Professoren zu Bonn, Jahrgang 1835, Heft 16, pp. 100—132, but cf. especially p. 119, notes * and **, p. 120, and p. 112, Anmerkung.

passages in the corpus juris canonici which not only condemn suicide, but likewise relate to the sepulture of suicides, and the question naturally arises: does not, perchance, some (more or less later) canon so far interfere with the above decree as to enforce or at least warrant some further curtailment or deprivation of the usual (catholic) funeral rites? To which same question, now, Jansen would his reply in the negative. Here are his own words: „Das corpus juris canonici enthält, meines Wissens, keine Stelle, worin den Selbstmördern die sepultura ecclesiastica verweigert würde; aber Spuren in etlicher Praxis, zufolge welcher man sie verfogte, finden sich an einer Stelle, worauf sich die Canonisten nicht zu berufen pflegen; ich nenne c. 11, X, de sepulturis. This very passage, however, we have already for a different object, adduced and discussed on p. 187 of §. 71 and I will here merely remark that Jansen manifestly understands by sepultura ecclesiastica not what is called sepultura solennis, but rather sepult. minus solennis as opposed to sepult. inhonesta (vide further on). However, I have not succeeded in becoming quite clear with myself about this matter, and must refrain from offering an opinion of my own, but rather incline to think that Frey, a very eminent modern catholic Professor, might be in the right, when he declared ¹⁾ that the corpus juris canonici does refuse to suicides burial interment in consecrated earth and the wonted liturgical ceremonies adding, however, most explicitly: „the interment (Beisetzung) of such persons takes place quietly in the proximity of the churchyard. Interment in a dishonoring place — sepultura asinina — occurs only in the secular penal laws, not in the canonical law.“ — To the secular penal laws, then, as enacted and acted upon in some of the leading European countries — I shall select *France, Germany and England* — we will now turn: they will throw much of the light we stand in need of on what Frey calls „sepultura asinina“, as also on sundry other unseemly and capricious items.

IV. The French, German and English mediaeval and post-mediaeval laws, and the practices, both ritual and fiscal, therewith connected, up to the present time.

1. France.

According to the établissements of Saint Louis, a law-book made by his command, but finished only shortly before his death, which

¹⁾ Kritischer Kommentar über das Kirchenrecht, fortgesetzt von Ebel, 1836. IV, Abth. I, pp. 57, 58.

took place anno 1270, and therefore not legally sanctioned, suicide was, or was to be, punished both in man and woman by the loss of the bona mobilia or moveable goods.¹⁾ „Se il avenoit que aucuns hons se pendist, ou noïast, ou s'occist en aucune maniere, si muëbles seroient au Baron, et aussi de la fame.“ Here, however, no allusion is made to any ritual disgrace. — Towards the end of the 13th century, Beaumanoir composed his celebrated law-book in which²⁾ suicide is incidentally mentioned. „Encore sont il dui cas de crime: li uns si est d'autrui empoisonner et li secons d'estre omicides de li meismes, si comme de celi qui se tuent à essient.“ Here two things may be noticed. Firstly, his placing suicide in the same category with the poisoning of another might seem to indicate that he himself viewed it as an equally guilty species of murder. Secondly, since he does not enunciate any definite punishment for it, we may infer from this his silence that, probably, no fixed law on the matter then existed, at least as far as his part of the French realm was concerned. — At the end of the 14th century, Boutellier composed another similar law-book „La Somme rurale“, in which the utterances on our immediate subject are apparently very circumstantial and minute, viz. under the head „De ceux qui se desespoïrent“ (NB. one of the signs or proofs of despair or desperation was, according to him, the refusing for 8 or 10 days, despite *dangerous* sickness, to receive the sacrament, make confession, etc.). Having experienced considerable difficulty in making my way through the various, considerably detached, portions of the incunabula-edition of this work which has lain before me, I shall prefer gathering my materials from, besides Ducange and Bourquelot, a classical work of Warnkönig and Stein.³⁾ Bouteiller, then, expresses, quite in the spirit of the Justinian Code (vide §. 35), as his own opinion that such persons as had committed suicide, because they had been rendered desperate by e. g. illness, domestic misfortunes, etc., should be exempt from all, both ritual and fiscal, punishment; at the same time, however, he gives vent to his regret that the usage of his time was contrary to this view of his own, inasmuch as the lay-judges, not bothering themselves in the least about the cause of despair, without

¹⁾ Liv. I, ch. 88, p. 106 of Saint-Martin's edit. Paris, 1786. Vide *ibid.* also p. 341. ²⁾ Coutumes de Beauvoisis, ch. 30, §. 14, T. I, p. 415 of Bouquet's edit. Paris, 1842. ³⁾ *Frankösische Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, B. III, p. 507, and vide *ibid.* pp. 178, 627, and cf. also B. II, pp. 47—50, 70, 71.

further ado confiscated the goods of the deceased as forfeited to the Seigneur, and likewise treated the suicidal corpse ignominiously. Passing by his recital of the case of a woman at Tournay, we are led to believe that, the confiscation of property being, according to the current law, the consequence of various and numerous crimes, this consequence might be legally averted by anticipating the judgment suicidally. Very naturally, however, the feudal lords of judicature viewed such a procedure as an encroachment on their rights: and Bouteiller's own proposition is about as follows: every case of suicide ought to be clearly examined into by the relevant judicial (seignorial) authorities, ere anything was done with the body; and if a person were proved to have despatched himself for the express purpose of withdrawing himself from a penal trial, his body and goods should be dealt with according to the sentence which would have been pronounced, had he not dispatched himself. — Indeed, I have found distinctly mentioned that anno 1340 Philippe de Valois accorded the body and goods of those who had inflicted death upon themselves exclusively to the local (the mention is of the town of Lille) seigneurs and their legitimate heirs: and that anno 1392 Charles VI confirmed this grant. — Touching, however, the ritual usages more particularly, I should only tire and disgust the reader, were I to quote from the various Coutumes at my bidding the outrageous and superstitious degradingness by which they were at these periods marked. „Si aucun se tue à son escient, il doit estre pendu par les pieds et traîné comme meurtrier, et sont ses biens meubles acquis à qu'il appartient.“ Thus one law literally runs; and in some localities the being conveyed out of the house through a hole made on purpose in the wall, the being stripped naked, dragged with a rope to a „claire“ as the place for interment, or burnt on a „bûcher“ — were unquestioned modes of the maltreatment of every and any suicidal corpse: which, with slight alterations or modifications, continued up to the days of Montesquieu and Voltaire, nay, up to the time of the changes wrought in France by the Great Revolution.

Not without reason, therefore, did Montesquieu, writing anno 1715, let Usbek in his lettres Persanes (vide §. 74) call the French laws against suicide „furious“, and declare that they appeared to him „unjust“; and half a century later Voltaire tersely, indignantly and sarcastically in his §. 18 quoted Commentaire sur le livre des délits et des peines describes and benotes them as follows. „Malgré

cette loi humaine de nos maîtres (he is alluding to the Roman laws as contained in the *corpus juris*), nous traînons encore sur la claie, nous traversons d'un pieu le cadavre d'un homme qui est mort volontairement; nous rendons sa mémoire infame; nous déshonorons sa famille autant qu'il est en nous; nous punissons le fils d'avoir perdu son père, et la veuve d'être privée de son mari. On confisque même le bien du mort; ce qui est en effet ravir le patrimoine des vivants auxquels il appartient. Cette coutume, comme plusieurs autres, est dérivée de notre droit canon. On conclut de là qu'on ne peut hériter d'un homme qui est censé n'avoir point d'héritage au ciel."

As long, then, as the Bourbons with their greeds and hypocrisies, their indifference and dullness occupied the French throne, though in individual instances actual practice may have stepped forth in a milder form, and, I presume, really did so, what has just been stated remained law and rite. But, when the Great Revolution with its dire potencies and tremendous realities whirlwind-like swept away so many time-hallowed abuses and nonsenses, without, however, by any means therefore raising upon the ruins and rubbish of the Past a Temple of Reason and Justice in which true wisdom and virtue could have desired to worship, it altered also this matter fundamentally. It is, I believe, the unanimous opinion of French writers that the abolition of all anti-suicidal laws was one of the first reformatorial labors of the first national assembly, viz. anno 1791. However, as far as I can myself make out the case from that collection of decrees and statutes which has lain before me for examination,¹⁾ the said abolition was made *by implication only*, since I have not been able to discover an *express* law against either the fiscal or the ritual punishment of suicide as having proceeded from the Assemblée nationale constituante, viz. Sept. 25, 1791 (and cf. Jan. 21, 1790).

At all events, however, in the Code de Napoléon the matter of suicide is passed over *in silence*, though, if I mistake not (judging, for instance, from the Newspaper accounts in connexion with the late suicide of the poet de Nerval), the French Clergy still retain the power of withholding from suicides *all solemn funeral rites*, a privilege which, I presume, must always in some degree remain to the sacerdotal orders of the *Catholic* church as such.

¹⁾ Bulletin annoté des lois, par Lepec, Paris 1824, vide Tom. I, pp. 556—560 chiefly.

Whether it be true that, as Burrows states (p. 43 of the already quoted book), in May 1819 a petition was presented to the Chamber of Deputies, soliciting a renewal of the old law against suicide, because in the year 1819 suicide had been so extremely frequent throughout France, e. g. 4 cases occurring in one day at Lyons, I do not know.

2. Germany.

We shall, I think, be best able to survey this portion of our subject, if we commence by placing ourselves at once in the age of the Reformation, and taking our stand upon the Carolina, i. e. the code of penal laws which was composed and enacted during the imperial sway of Charles the Fifth, the first edition of which was printed and published anno 1532. We will then compare with it sundry somewhat earlier and also considerably later anti-suicidal laws of such particular large and small States as may be said to form either by their spirit or their language or their geographical position a portion of that most indefinite and partitioned of European land which we English generally understand by what we vaguely and comprehensively denominate Germany. Since most of the books from which our extracts will have to be made are penned in more or less *obsolete* German, I will prefer giving the quotations in English.

The Carolina contains a separate § on the punishment of suicide (*Estraff eyner tödtung*) which runs thus.¹⁾ „If anybody be indicted and arraigned (*beflagt und inn recht erfordert oder bracht würde*, i. e. the legal proceedings having been already begun against him) on account of matters a conviction of which would have involved forfeiture of life *and* property, and destroy himself *from fear of such merited penalty*, his heirs shall not be capable or receptive of his property, but the property he leaves behind shall in this case escheat to the magistracy unto which in this case the penal jurisdiction appertains. If, however, a person dispatch himself not from (*aufferhalb*) the above mentioned manifest cause even in cases which involve *only* (*alleyn*) the forfeiture of life, or otherwise from *illnesses of the body, melancholy, infirmity of their senses, or other suchlike dullnesses* (*bloßigkeiten*), his heirs shall not on that account be hindered in their inheritance, and against this decree no ancient usage

¹⁾ *Sachs. ober Reichliche Gerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V und des Heiligen Römischen Reichs*, Art. 135, with which cf. also Art. 218.

custom, or statute shall have power, but be hereby revoked, quashed and done away with, and in this and other suchlike cases our Imperial written law be kept."

First of all, a few remarks on the portions I have underlined. „Life and property“: *leib und gut*. Some copies read *leib ober gut*; but falsely; ¹⁾ indeed, the little word „only“ (*alleyn*) in the immediately following sentence would by itself suffice to show that *leib und gut* is the reading which the context alone warrants. — „From fear of such merited penalty“, i. e. *presumptively* so: a proof to this effect need not be made out, if but the contrary cannot be established.

Secondly, we have, consequently, here essentially a revival of what we found (vide §. 35) in the Justinian Code. The entire decree occupies itself solely with fiscal points — nowhere in the Carolina is the ritual element touched upon —, and what we learn therefrom is this: confiscation was to take place only when the crime itself for which the suicide stood indicted was one which would have been *expressly* followed by forfeiture of property, not of life *only*, but, doubtless, also of property, *though* not of life likewise.

Finally, we cannot but infer from the concluding clause that both law and practice elsewhere, viz. in German States for which the Carolina was intended, were of a somewhat different tenor and complexion, so that we find ourselves naturally led to cast a glance at some of those laws and practices, or, perhaps, in some instances rather practices only — against law.

Only two of those elder codes have come within my reach. In the first of them, the celebrated so-called Saxon-Mirror, composed anno 1216, however, no fiscal punishment at all of suicide as such is decreed. ²⁾ „Whoever loses his life by a judicial sentence, his next of kin (*gedeling*) takes his heritage. Whoever also despatches himself, his heir takes his property. Produce of theft and robbery, if found upon him, the judge shall keep a year and a day. If nobody then by right claim it, the judge shall employ it for his (own) benefit.“ — In the second of them, on the contrary, the penal code composed anno 1507 at the instance of the Bishop of Bam-

¹⁾ Vide Koch in the Preface to his edit. of 1824, pp. 2 and 35, and cf. also Wächter, ubi supra, p. 64. ²⁾ *Sachsenspiegel*, oder *sächsisches Landrecht*, Buch II, Art. 32, §§. 1, 2 in Prof. Sachse's edit.

berg, confiscation of property is prescribed against any suicide who despatches himself on account of a crime which is *capitally* punished. „If a man be beflagt, und in recht gefordert, whereby, if convicted he has deserved death, or from fear of the maltreatment awaiting him, destroy himself, he shall not have heirs. But, if anybody for other beside the above-mentioned causes, and from disease of his body or frailty of the mind kill himself, his heirs shall not be hindered in their inheritance. And, where in such cases there exists a doubt, in what wise suicide was committed, our counsel shall be solicited and accorded for lawful trial and judgment.“

Now, however, a few samples of laws and practices at subsequent periods.

„Those who despatch themselves from fear of punishment or from discontent (*Misemoeth*), whilst the penal judicial cause is not yet decided according to law, half of his goods escheats to the lord of the manor (*Herrschop*). And, nevertheless, the deserved punishment shall be inflicted on the deceased. In the same manner it shall be held, when a person who was not penally arraigned, destroyed himself from discontent (*Misemoeth*), viz. one half of his goods shall escheat to the lord. And the dead body shall be conveyed out of the house beneath the threshold by the beadle or flayer, and buried in the field.“ Thus in the *Dithmarsische Landrecht* of the year 1567, Art. 131, §§. 1—3, as quoted by Schirach,²⁾ (though, as far as I could discover,³⁾ the earliest *Dithmarsisch Landrecht* of the year 1447 is silent on this subject); and later epitomes and modifications of the said *Landrecht* are still more sweeping and severe, since (§. 56 of) the *Neumünsterische Kirchspiels- und Vordeshelmische Amtsgebräuche*, as quoted also by Schirach⁴⁾, express themselves thus. „If anybody destroy himself from fear that he would be punished on account of his misdeeds, his goods shall escheat to the lords; but, if anybody destroy himself from derangement (*Unsinntigkeit*) or disease of the head, or despair, then one half of his goods escheats to the lords, his corpse, however, is conveyed by the beadle out of the house beneath the threshold and buried in the field.“

¹⁾ *Bambergisch Halsgerichts und peinlich Ordnung*, Art. 160. The edit. before me is the 3rd of the year 1508. ²⁾ *Handbuch des Hessischen Criminalrechts*, 1828, pp. 329, 330. ³⁾ Vide Michelsen's *Sammlung altdithmarscher Rechtsquellen*, 1842. ⁴⁾ By the by, this writer's extracts touching the essentially identical law and practice at the same periods of time in Schleswig are much more detailed, vide his *Handbuch des Schleswigschen Criminalrechts*, 1829, pp. 333—336.

The Statutes of the Hanseatic city of Lübeck — copies out of the years 1608 and 1728 have lain before me — decree ritual punishment only.¹⁾ „If anybody despatch himself, or be according to judgment and law decapitated, hanged, or otherwise executed, his heirs retain all his property uncurtailed, and nothing thereof belongs to the Court. Whoso kills himself shall be buried in the field.“

And, not to tire the reader, I will refer him to e. g. the *Hennebergisch Landesordnung* of the year 1539, the *Tiroler Landes- und Polizeiordnung* of the year 1573, the *Württembergisch Gesetzbuch* of the year 1621, the *Niederösterreichische Landgerichtsordnung* of the year 1656 etc. etc.: in all of them he will find fixations for the ritual, and in most of them also for the fiscal, punishment of suicide. The former element of punishment is varied in many ways, e. g. the corpse was burnt, or, placed in a cask to be floated along the river into the sea, or, dragged out of the window by the public executioner, laid then like a carcase upon a cart, and interred by the same functionary of penal jurisdiction in the public flaying-place, or beneath the gallows, etc. And the latter element of punishment is also varied in many ways, e. g. one half of the property was confiscated, or, the whole of it, or an arbitrary portion, accordingly as the deceased had or had not children, or none at all of it in some instances. — However, on the *two leading States of Germany*, viz. *Prussia* and *Austria*, we will and must dwell at somewhat greater length.

A. Prussia.

We might surmise that, when Frederic II of Prussia had ascended the throne, and turned his very special attention also to legislation, his ultra-liberal philosophical (Voltaireish) notions, and his views on suicide in particular (vide §. 19), would induce him to treat our topic with a very considerable degree of forbearance. And so it was. Already Dec. 6, 1751 we find him issuing the following Royal Rescript about the carriers and sepulture of suicides.²⁾

„Since it is Our most high intention that henceforward the bodies of suicides shall no longer be put away by the flayer or laid in the flaying-place, inasmuch as thereby only their relatives suffer quite guiltlessly, and are placed in great perplexity by the re-

¹⁾ Lübeck Statuta, lib. IV, tit. IX, 1, 2. ²⁾ *Novum corpus Prussico-Brandenburgensium constitutionum, præcipue Marchicarum*, T. III, p. 1203 of the *Supplementum*, Berlin, 1766.

proach and ignominy which thereby fall upon them: We abolish herewith and by force of this all Edicts which have been enacted in former times touching the punishment of suicide, and on the contrary decree that for the future in suchlike unfortunate (unglücklichen) cases the body be buried secretly (heimlich), yet in an honest (ehrliche) manner, but the matter itself be kept as quiet as possible, and au reste (im übrigen) the surviving family shall not be supposed on this account to defray anything, whatever name it may have, except the funeral costs. Consequently, you have to be guided and to proceed with all obedience accordingly, in the cases that shall come before you, and also to instruct the Magistrates and other Tribunals (Judicia), subordinated to you.

By His Royal Majesty's
most gracious special command.

Von Bismarck, von Danckelmann.

And again Oct. 28, 1752 this Rescript is confirmed by another ¹⁾ addressed to the Government of Pomerania, with the express addition that, as matter of course, the relatives may demand that the interment shall take place in the *Churchyard*, only however quietly (in der Stille).

With these two Rescripts we will compare also the Law published already 1750 in edit. 2 of the Frederician Code.²⁾ „Those who take away their own lives from melancholy or disease are to be buried in the churchyard in a particular place, however without singing or ringing (Sang und Klang). The Judges, on the contrary, are always to decree specificc what is to be done with the bodies of those who in prison took away their own lives, after they had been convicted of, or had confessed to, a heavy misdeed, or had been condemned praevia tortura. — The Wills of those who have subsequently dispatched themselves conscientia of a crime with which confiscatio bonorum is connected, shall become invalid, and their property shall escheat to the Fiscus.“

Finally, the Law-Book of the Prussian States, as completed about thirty or forty years later, decrees as follows.³⁾ „Suicides shall not be ignominiously treated (beschimpft) after their death:

¹⁾ Ibid. T. I, p. 391, Nr. 72: Declaratio an die Pommerische Regierung, in Verordigung der Selbst-Mörder betreffend. ²⁾ Project des corpus juris Fredericianum. Pars II, lib. I, tit. II, art. II, §. 13, and lib. VII, tit. II, §. 10. ³⁾ Allgemeines Landrecht der Preussischen Staaten, Th. II, tit. XX, §§. 803—805.

nevertheless, they shall not come in for aught of what the death and memory of other persons of their station or rank are wont to be honored by. — Persons who take away their own lives, in order to withdraw themselves from an infamy-involving (infamirend) punishment which they had incurred by gross crimes, shall be interred (verfcharrt) on the place of execution, according to the finding of the tribunal which directs the process. — If a penal sentence should have already been pronounced against them, it shall be carried into effect, as far as possible, decorous, and serviceable for the deterring of others, against the dead body.“ Which last item, however, a Ministerial rescript of the year 1812 considerably modifies.¹⁾

B. Austria.

The Penal Code which was published in the year 1769 under the Reign of Maria Theresa, after whom it has been called, expends four entire folio pages²⁾ on our topic, so that we must limit ourselves to extracting such items as are most important for our purpose. Carefully and repeatedly attention is drawn to the difference between suicide from disease, melancholy etc. and premeditated, wanton suicide; and, if there should be any reasonable doubt about the matter, the Judges are charged to decide rather in favor of the former alternative, i. e. to lean mercifully towards the deceased. „Whosoever destroys himself from frailty of his reason, over-burdening (allzugroßer) melancholy, or disease, shall be interred by respectable (ehrlieh) persons, and according to christian order (Ordnung) in consecrated ground, yet, generally speaking, and more especially, if the cause of self-destruction be doubtful, not with pomp or in respectable places (an vornehmen Orten: what does this exactly mean? In vaults? In select or conspicuous parts of the cemetery? In churchyards intended more particularly for the upper classes?), but in all other respects he shall be dealt with, as if he had died a natural death“ (§. 2). As regards the wilful, wanton suicide, however, who is styled a „villain, forgetful of God and the salvation of his own soul“, his corpse is, partly for the terror of others, to be dealt with as follows. The executioner, or the executioner's male servant (Knecht), shall drag or let down his corpse out of the house, or from the spot, where the suicide was commit-

¹⁾ Vide Mankopff's edit. B. VII, p. 338. ²⁾ Constitutio Criminalis Theresiana, Art. 93, pp. 253—256.

ted, in whatever manner this can be done best without injury to the corpse, then place it like a piece of dead cattle on a barrow or cart, and inter (*verfcharren*) it under the gallows, or in some other ignominious spot. Moreover, his memory is to be held evermore in contempt and dishonor. Thus, the purpose and purport of this procedure is the putting away of the corpse of a suicide with all possible speed, as if it were a mere carcase, out of the sight of man. Supposing, however, the said wilful, wanton suicide to have been additionally a *culprit*, and to have destroyed himself in prison, in order to escape from some heavy punishment, his corpse may, according to the nature and magnitude of his crime, be burnt upon a pile, or put upon a wheel, or suspended, etc. (§. 7.) — Thus much ritually. In a fiscal point of view, even the wilful, wanton suicide as such does not forfeit any portion of his property; if, however, he had previously committed some crime which involved confiscation as a punishment, all his moveable and immoveable goods shall escheat to the fiscus, whatever testamentary arrangements he himself should have chanced to make. But, strangely at variance with this general fixation is the clause that in certain districts, where earlier ancient Austrian codes had accorded to the lords of the manor the property of suicides as such (wilful, wanton ones only, we must, I trust, presume), this privilege is „most graciously“ by Maria Theresa left intact. The German text in this particular is, however, not clear to me, and I therefore prefer letting the reader judge for himself on this item from the following Latin marginal notice which is also not clear, unless the meaning be that certain local authorities shall enjoy the property, and not the Imperial Treasury. „*Confiscatio autem hanc limitationem recipit, ut dynastis, si quibus jus gladii cum castro, simulque ex privilegio jus fisci competit, sua prerogativa in salvo maneat.*“ — NB. In case a suicide should not have died *immediately*, and should have, prior to his actual death, *seriously repented*, he is to be regarded as a christian believer, and interred accordingly; but, should he, though surviving his deed for some time, have remained impenitent, his corpse is to be dealt with as above.

Far more briefly, but not exactly much more mildly, did Francis I legislate: 1) „the body of the suicide, accompanied only by the

1) Oesterreichisches Gesetzbuch über Verbrechen und schwere Polizeübertretungen, 1803, B. II, §. 92. And his enactments have remained the last.

watch (sentry), shall be conveyed to a place situate outside of the churchyard, and put under ground by judicial ministrants.“ And, previously, even the semi-protestant, unquestionably enlightened, and only two rashly reforming, Joseph II, from whom something gentler might have been expected, had still decreed that „the suicidal corpse was to be put under ground by the flayer“ (Schinder). He, however, supposes only the case of a person committing self-destruction at a time, when no sign of mental derangement existed, and no disease which might interfere with the free use of Reason. He also expressly annotates that, if a suicide, prior to his actual death, still show repentance, only the usual place of burial is to be refused to his corpse, and he is to be interred without any escort or pomp. Moreover, should the suicide have been committed for the purpose of escaping from the apprehended punishment for some crime committed, the name of the suicide shall be affixed to the gallows, and universally published, along with the specification of his crime, as far as the latter may be regarded as legally proved.¹⁾

3. England.

Reversing, for reasons which I shall presently mention, the order I pursued in reference to France and Germany, I will begin with what Blackstone states²⁾ to be the English Law in his day, and then go backwards (as far back at least as my absolute want of all other *legal* works on England for reference will enable me to do), and also forwards up to our own time. I will, however, give in parenthesis what Stephen has added thereto. After a few brief common-places on the enormity, spiritual and temporal, of suicide, the learned Knight says. „But now the question follows, what punishment can human laws inflict on one who has withdrawn himself from their reach? They can only act upon what he has left behind him, his reputation and fortune; (and this the law of England formerly did with the greatest severity. It acted) on the former by an ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body (and without Christian rites of sepulture); on the latter, by a forfeiture of all his goods and chattels to the King. As if husband and wife be possessed jointly of a term of years in land, and the husband drowns himself; the land shall be forfeited to the

¹⁾ Allgemeines Gesetz über Verbrechen, und derselben Bestrafung, 1787, Th. I, §§. 123, 124. ²⁾ Commentaries on the Laws of England, Book IV, ch. 14.

King, and the wife shall not have it by survivorship. For by the act of casting himself into the water he forfeits the term; which gives a title to the king, prior to the wife's title by survivorship, which could not accrue till the instant of her husband's death. And, though it must be owned that the letter of the law herein borders a little upon severity, yet it is some alleviation that the power of mitigation is left in the breast of the sovereign, who upon this — as on all other occasions — is reminded by the oath of his office to execute judgment in mercy."

Such, then, was the English law anno 1765, when Blackstone's book was penned or published; and, though some one item or other in the application of the fiscal punishment did really appear to our high-tory teacher at a high-tory university (Oxford) under the reign of a high-tory king (George III) to „border a little on severity“, he does not seem to have objected in the least to, or to have had any misgivings at all about, the justice and propriety of the ritual punishment. (NB. The few individual trials or decisions to which Blackstone refers his readers in the notes, I have not had an opportunity of inspecting; but, on turning to Hawkins' notes on Shakespeare (Hamlet V, 1), I find a case mentioned, which is said to have been determined in the third year of Queen Elizabeth, and to be reported in Plowden's Commentaries, viz. the case of a Dame Hales, whose husband Sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river, and was brought in *felo de se*, which I incline to believe the identical case Blackstone has employed by way of illustration.

Anno 1661, the Rubric to the Order for the Burial of the Dead, as contained in the Book of Common Prayer, was framed, and to it the following instruction is prefixed. „Here is to be noted, that the Office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or *have laid violent hands upon themselves*.“ And Shepperd (as quoted on p. 487 of edit. 3 of Mant's Book of Common Prayer) informs us that the said prefatory notice „must not be considered a new law, but merely as explanatory of the ancient canon law, and of the drevious usage in England.“ No doubt; we must, therefore, go further back. However, prior to doing so, a few simple queries may be permitted.

Since no exceptions or modifications whatever are made, are *all* suicides as such here meant, also e. g. bona fide idiots and lunatics, and a fortiori all those whom e. g. the coroner's jury has

declared to have destroyed themselves, whilst in a state of lunacy or a fit of insanity? If we answer this question in the affirmative, then the prescription must seem exceedingly harsh and unjust in regard to bona fide idiots and lunatics, and also somewhat unreasonable and severe opposite to the verdict of the inquest. If, on the contrary, we presume the said suicides to be excepted, why was not a clause to this effect introduced? This is one point. Another point is as follows. I will and, if I mistake not, must take for granted that the said suicides were and are to be excepted; but then a minister might very easily be placed in a somewhat peculiar dilemma. For instance, NN, a wealthy and respectable man, perhaps, a nobleman or a clergyman, has „laid violent hands upon himself.“ *Almost as a matter of course* (vide what was said in §. 13), the coroner's verdict declares that he did so under the influence of temporary derangement. However, a minister may have every reason to know that the said verdict is a most *palpably bare-faced falsehood* to which nobody in his right senses can possibly attach any meaning or weight: how, then, in such a case may a minister act, or ought he to act? If he were to act up to his own more correct judgment, he could scarcely avoid applying the rubrical precept to such a case: must he overlook it, to the rigid observance of which his oath has bound him, and comply with a magisterial mandate which he knows to be a mere mockery? For my own part, I should like to see a case of this kind brought into our supreme Ecclesiastical Court, and fairly tried. Far more useless and absurd cases have occasionally found their way into the said Court, if my memory serve me aright. A third point likewise I am not quite clear about. Does the said „not using of the Office ensuing“ necessarily imply that a minister is *not to attend* at the funeral, and that the corpse is not to be laid in *consecrated* ground? Perhaps, however, it is only my extreme ignorance which suggests to me these doubts; but I really cannot help it, since the Rubric is so darkly brief: why, if it wished to be comprehended, did it not assume a more intelligible shape? Were I at this moment in England, I might be able to gain satisfaction on these matters by turning to the one or the other book; as it is, I can only put on paper the difficulties that have momentarily arisen in my own mind.

Going about half a century further back, the pages of Shakespeare (vide however §§. 18 and 13) are not quite uninteresting to

us also as regards the laws and usages prevalent among ourselves at that period.

Hamlet V, 1.

1 Clown. Is she (Ophelia) to be buried in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 Clown. I tell thee, she is; and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner (coroner) hath sate on her, and finds it christian burial.

Let us look at what connects itself with these few words.

The first clown seems to take for granted that a suicide would, according to the ordinarily current English law, be excluded from „christian burial“, and that Ophelia as *felo de se* therefore ought to be so too. The second clown, however, informs us that the coroner had, nevertheless, decreed to her corpse „christian burial“; yet, we are not informed, whether, because she had drowned herself *from insanity*, or whether, because she was supposed to have been drowned *accidentally*. But the former case seems to be the only admissible one here. What, then, does „christian burial“ here mean? Consulting the entire scene, it means foremost specially interment in consecrated ground, in the ordinary churchyard; for, the Priest subsequently explains the refusal or negation of christian burial as synonymous with burial in „ground unsanctified“; and therefore the grave is to be *immediately* („straight“), without further ado or delay, dug and made ready for the reception of her corpse. But it as evidently does not mean exactly a funeral with the full usual priestly solemnities; for, after all, Ophelia is buried only with „*am med*“, i. e. modified, moderated, rites: *the maimed rites* betoken that the corse „did with desperate hand *fordo* (undo) its own life.“ The entire matter is not very clearly expressed by Shakspeare, nor do we learn what specific influence the „royal mandate“ was supposed to exercise in this particular case; at all events, however, Ophelia's corpse is „brought home (interred) with bell and burial, and maiden strewments“, and only „the requiem“ or soul-mass is still omitted.

Inferences. Firstly, in Shakspeare's time, suicides, if the coroner's inquest found a verdict of self-felony, were denied burial in consecrated ground; and „shards, flints, and pebbles“ were thrown on them in lieu of charitable prayers. This was „the Order.“ Secondly, in his time, from whatsoever motive, in *whatsoever state of mind*, suicide had been committed, the rites of burial in the case

of any and every suicide, were and remained to some extent „maimed“, and at all events the requiem did not take place. — This in general. Now, however, a few simple remarks on one or two items in the scene before us.

a. Whereas e. g. Steevens, Douce, Valpy explain „straight“ by „immediately“, as I have done, Johnson strangely assigns to it in this passage a somewhat extraordinary meaning. Here is his note. „Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant.“ First of all, then, there can be no doubt about the fact that straight frequently occurs in Shakspeare in the meaning of immediately. One example may suffice. „He's hearing of a cause; he will come *straight*; I'll tell him of you (Measure for Measure, II, 2). And etymologically Delius in his edit. of Hamlet not inaptly compares the German adverb *stracks* in the identical signification. In the second place, however, what would or could Johnson's interpretation really amount to? Ellis in his edition of Brand¹⁾ has jumbled together, from sundry rare old books with which I am not familiar, a vast heap of material about Johnson's interpretation which the reader must be left to consult and, if he like, to digest at his leisure. For my own part, two questions would seem to me to have to be answered, if Johnson's interpretation is to rest upon anything at all. Firstly, was it ever the practice in England to make graves from North to South, for the purpose of stigmatizing more or less the person to be interred? Or, secondly, was it ever the custom in England to leave, for instance, the Northern portion, as the bleaker, drearier one, of the churchyard unconsecrated, and there to bury persons inadmissible to christian burial, e. g. self-felons, and, if you like, in graves dug in such a manner as Johnson hints at? I know not; but I doubt it much.

b. That matter of throwing „shards, flints, pebbles“ on the grave had, perhaps, its origin in the Old Testament:²⁾ it was, as it were, a species of „stoning“ the very corpse itself.

Which casual allusion to the O. T. may fitly lead us on to explain a technical mediæval term which has already occurred to us in this §, and about which more or less of confusion and dis-

¹⁾ Observations on popular antiquities, etc., vol. II, pp. 196—203. ²⁾ Vide Joshua VII, 26, and VIII, 29.

pute has arisen. I allude to the word „ass's burial“, *sepultura asinina s. asini*. We read¹⁾ of Jehojakim, king of Judah, that „he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem“, and that „his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.“ According to which passages, then, the *sepultura asini* would really be no interment at all, but, on the contrary, only a being dragged by e. g. menials of justice, an executioner or his assistant, into the open field, and there left to rot and to be devoured *above the earth*. Indeed, a passage which Du Cange²⁾ quotes, and which dates as far back as the year 900, induces us to infer that the *sepultura asini* really did *exclude interment* of any sort. „*Sepultura asini sepeliantur, et in sterquilinum super faciem terrae sint, ut sint in exemplum opprobrii et maledictionis praesentibus generationibus, et futuris.*“ Nevertheless, in another part of his work³⁾ Du Cange explains *sepultura asini* as *synonymous* with *sepultura canina*, as simply = *sepultura bestialis generically*. Haltaus⁴⁾ does so too; yet the very example which he quotes as having occurred anno 1548 in relation to a suicide expressly lets the said suicide be covered with earth or laid under the earth. Also Boehmer is guilty of the same linguistic inaccuracy, when he writes⁵⁾ that in case of wilful suicide „*honestas sepultura locum non habet; sed cadaver a carnifice per fenestras dejectum in locum infamen conditur, et haec sepultura vocatur canina seu asinina.*“ *Sepultura canina*, dog's burial, namely, was something far less severe than *sepultura asinina*. It signified simply and solely *exclusion from consecrated ground*, from the usual graveyard, and was, doubtless, prescribed by the *corpus juris canonici* as an ecclesiastical punishment for certain orders of criminals and degrees of criminality, e. g. the excommunicated, heretics, etc., whereas the *sepultura asinina* was not even known to, let alone countenanced by, the *corpus juris canonici*: it presupposed some *heavier* measure of criminality, and was the concern of (temporal) penal judicature. This name likewise was, I presume, borrowed from Scripture, viz. had reference to Jesus' having applied⁶⁾ the word „dog“ to those who were not of Israel, i. e.

¹⁾ Jeremiah, XXII, 19, and XXXVI, 30. ²⁾ Glossarium a. v. Imblocatus, in Charta Herivaei Archiep. Rem. in Concilio Remensi. ³⁾ S. v. Sepultura Asini. ⁴⁾ Glossarium Germanicum medii Aevi, 1758, p. 116. ⁵⁾ Jus Parochiale, 1730, sect. II, cap. II, §. 11, p. 219. ⁶⁾ Mark. VII, 27.

to the profane in the classical sense, consequently, to those excluded from church-communion. Therefore, if I mistake not, *sepultura canina* was synonymous with what was called in the middle ages also *sepultura aggreſtis*, i. e. simply burial in the open field, as, for instance, explained by Haultaus: ¹⁾ Begraben auß Feld ober auß baß ungeweyhete, *sepelire aliquem in campo*, i. e. loco profano, non dedicato, extra fines coemeterii aut templi, ut canones volunt sepeliri excommunicatos, haereticos, usurarios manifestos“, etc. — We should thus gain ²⁾ the following rubric: *sepultura honesta* sive christiana sive ecclesiastica sive fidelium, which might be either solennis or minus solennis, though equally in consecrated ground; and *sepultura inhonesta*, sive canina sive aggreſtis, the extreme of which was *sepultura asinina*, each in consecrated ground, but the last-mentioned extreme ceasing to be, properly speaking, interment at all.

c. To the „driving a stake into the corpse“ there is no allusion in Shakspeare, and I still remain somewhat at a loss how to account for this still further intensification of ritual punishment. Of course, I am not ignorant of the circumstance that in the middle ages there is occasional mention of „imblocatus.“ Du Cange's somewhat long article on this evidently most intensified form of all mediaeval modes of dealing with the corpse of the excommunicate, from which I have already quoted, is not by any means very clear. As far as I can gather from all the sources I have consulted, we must conceive this term to mean that the human corpse was either placed upright *in a hollow tree* or laid down and fastened *on a felled stump*, bloc being = our word block, trunk of a tree, log of wood, etc.; but the main point would be: the said corpses received no burial at all, remained above ground, as a prey to birds and beasts. „Sint cadavera eorum in escam volatilibus coeli, et bestiis terrae, et non sint, qui sepeliant eos.“ Thus a relevant mediaeval formula, as given by Du Cange. But no quotation I have fallen in with would necessarily lead us to infer that suicides as such were ever thus dealt with in the middle ages; and I strongly suspect that they never were included in so severe a manner among the excommunicate. But, even if they had been, our English matter of „impalement“ would not be identical with the said imblocatus, and we

¹⁾ L. c., p. 976 s. v. Hundes-Begräbnis. ²⁾ Cf. Glück, Ausführliche Erläuterung der Pandekten, B. XI, pp. 409—411.

must therefore look elsewhere for its origin. In both Tacitus and Dio Cassius, then, I have found passages which affirm that both the ancient Germans and the ancient Britons had the custom of casting the corpses of heavy culprits into a bog or some similar place, and forcing a log of wood or something of the sort into them, thus pinning them, as it were, firmly to the spot, pretty much in the same fashion as wanton boys now-a-days treat cock-chafers. Had not, perhaps, our matter of impalement its origin in this Paganic reminiscence? I merely put the question, do not affirm the fact. Moreover, I know neither when this revolting practice commenced among ourselves in regard to suicides, nor when it ceased. Legally *abolished* it was not till anno 1823, as we shall presently learn; but my impression is that it went out of use towards the end of the 18th century already; at least, in a most disgusting account which the London Times gives anno 1818¹⁾ of the interment of a suicidal Spanish Officer in London on a cross-road towards midnight — he was thrown in a state of nudity!!! into a deep hole which common laborers had been made to dig — this one item is wanting to complete the horrid and stupid piece of barbarism.²⁾

„Cross-roads“, consequently, still anno 1818 in London itself! — Whether any particular superstition originally connected itself with the selection of such localities, I cannot positively state, since they may have been chosen merely because of their being, in the nature of things, the *most public* sort of highways. Among the classical Ancients, however, the *τρόδος* s. *τροδιά*, *trivium* s. *trivia* was undoubtedly in evil repute, not only because all sorts of offal, carcases, and even human bodies used to be flung there, but, more especially, because Hekate, as Goddess of Magic, was there worshipped; and supposed there to hold her ominous sway in an unusual measure.³⁾

Whilst occupied with these superstitious ferocities, I might as well say one word also on the matter of *not* conveying the suicidal corpse *across the threshold*, but through a hole dug beneath the threshold, or made in the wall, or letting it down out of the window,

¹⁾ Vide the Times of Dec. 7, 1818. It is the following number (Dec. 8.) from which I shall extract the leading article I shall introduce in the next §.

²⁾ It was, however, not wanting anno 1760 in the case of the suicidal murderer Stirn, vide Criminal Recorder, vol. III, p. 243. ³⁾ Vide e. g. Suetonius in vita Vespasiani, c. 5, Ausonius, epigr. LXXII, l. 1, Euripides' Ion, l. 1031, and Aeschylus' Eumenides.

a practice which seems to have been common in *Scotland* at all events even in the present century, since Sir Walter Scott assures us:¹⁾ „it is still an article of popular superstition in *Scotland*, that the corpse of a suicide ought not to be carried out of the apartment by the door, but lowered through a window, or conveyed through a breach in the wall. Neglect of this observance is supposed to expose the house to be *haunted*.“ We know how *sacred* the threshold used to be considered in classical Antiquity, and how *sacred* it is still considered among e. g. the Arabs and many Eastern barbarous tribes. The reason is palpable: it is the legitimate inlet and outlet for the family, the frontier which separates the domestic castle from the public way, and the spot which the guest treads first. The inference and application from and of this in regard to the conveyance of the suicidal corpse, to which a sort of sullyingness and ominousness was supposed to attach, everybody can easily draw and make for himself. —

I have preferred discussing here these various items to endeavoring to trace back to the reign of Henry III († 1272) or that of Edward I († 1307) — so far back we must go, if I mistake not, but not still further back — the first laws or practices of confiscation and ignominious burial in reference to suicide in England, to which task, moreover, I should not be able to do perfect justice, because not by any means all the books I might wish to consult are (I am residing in a German town) now within my reach. Ruffhead's collection of Statutes at large has not afforded the desired information to me, and the Decisions on the cases referred to by Blackstone and Stephen are not at my bidding. Philipps' *Englische Reichs- und Rechtsgeschichte* does not extend beyond the reign of Henry II, and Reeve's *History of the English Laws* I have not had access to. A few days' studious reading in the British Museum Library, however, would suffice to supply the necessary certainty on this point; for, mere isolated quotations at second hand could not possess any value either for me myself or for any one of my readers.

We will, therefore, leave ante-Shakspearian ages behind us, and, taking a long leap forward into most recent times, may²⁾ without

¹⁾ Abstract of the Eyrbyggja-Saga, as communicated on p. 530 of the Appendix to Blackwell's edit. of Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. ²⁾ Burn's *Ecclesiastical Law*, edit. 9 by Phillimore, vol. I, pp. 266, 267 and vol. III, p. 654. (Stat. IV. Geo. IV, c. 52, §§. 1, 2.)

any research whatsoever at once ascertain how the law at present stands.

In the year 1823 — and not until then, thus tenacious and not over-practical are we English in all matters ecclesiastico-ethical which have once found a place in our laws and customs —, the fourth year of his „most religious“, alias most Sardanapalus-like, Majesty, George IV, it was graciously provided that the corpse of the suicide, i. e. if he or she should have been found guilty of self-felony, is to be interred privately, and without any performance of the rites of Christian burial, in the churchyard or other burial ground of the parish, without any stake being driven into the body; such interment, however, is to take place within twenty-four hours from the finding of the inquisition, and between nine and twelve at night. — Therefore, not only the deprivation of Christian rites still remains, but, legally at least, though practically, doubtless, no longer, also the forfeiture of property, i. e. inasmuch as the forfeited property would fall to the Sovereign, and the Sovereign has the power of remitting the forfeiture, the Crown now-a-days, I believe, never takes or even claims the possessions of a suicide, though pronounced *felo de se*, from the surviving natural heirs, or from those to whom the suicide may have by will bequeathed them.¹⁾

Appendix. Touching the mere unsuccessful *attempt* at suicide.

The earliest known christian law on the punishment of this matter belongs to the year 693, and is a decree of the council then held at Toledo; and according to it²⁾ on those who, having from desperation attempted suicide, had been prevented from the successful execution of their purpose by the arresting power of the hand of a second party, or by some unforeseen and undesired counter-acting influence — for the case here put is not that of their having of their own accord suddenly stopped short of the accomplishment — excommunication for two months was to be visited. „*Quorundam etenim hominum tam grave inolevit desperationis contagium, ut dum fuerint pro qualibet negligentia aut disciplinae censura multati, aut pro sui purgatione sceleris sub poenitentiae satisfactione custodia mancipati, incumbente desperationis incommodo, seipsos malunt aut laqueo aut suspendio enecare, aut ferro vel aliis mortiferis*

¹⁾ Vide also Stephen's *New Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. IV, p. 110. ²⁾ *Mansi*, T. XII, p. 71, *concilium Toletanum XVI*, c. IV.

casibus interimere: et nisi praeventi cujuslibet rei occasione, suam nihilo minus diabolus in eis perficit voluntatem. Proinde huic nequissimae suadellae cupientes ponere finem, et malagmam congruam tali aegrimoniae providere, caetus nostri decernit sacratissima unio, ut quicumque talibus decipulis irretitus, interemptionis evaserit casus, *duorum mensium spatio, et a catholicorum collegio, et a corpore ac Christi sanguine sacro manebit omnimodo alienus*: quia oportet ut per poenitentiae censuram pristinae reddatur spei atque saluti, qui animam suam per desperationem conabatur diabolo sociare.^a

Inasmuch, now, as, according to all deeper religious insight, the guilt of attempted suicide is, speaking *morally*, the very same as that of accomplished suicide, we perhaps, might feel disposed to wonder not a little at the extreme *gentleness* of this comparatively ancient Spanish decree. In some measure at least, however, two considerations may account for the said gentleness. Firstly. The decree was made with especial reference to persons into whom the desire for death had been inspired by more or less extreme rigor of one sort or the other, so that, if the church desired to win them back to a love of life, anything like great harshness would have palpably been out of place, nay, would have in all probability defeated its own purpose. Secondly. The priestly corporation of that age was, we may presume, pretty confident of its spiritual power over a rescued victim of this description. The church would naturally represent to him how great a crime he had intended to commit, and what fearful, haply, unending, torments in a future world he had escaped from by God's merciful interference: and in such wise making the most of the opportunity afforded to her, she might by mere reproach and admonition easily succeed, within the space of two short months, in impressing upon her charge such penitence and apprehensiveness as would prove an effectual bar against any repetition of the attempt, and, moreover, perhaps additionally be an inducement to him to live henceforward so as to atone, by redoubled vigilance, humility, resignation, penance, for the mortal sin he had once attempted to commit.

In the later portions of the middle ages, however, the ecclesiastics or magistracies, whenever they legislated at all on this matter, apparently did so in a much more severe or thorough manner, and not without a superadded spice of superstition. One example, as far as it proves anything, shall suffice by way of characteristic

illustration. In the registers of the Parliament of Paris towards the conclusion of the 14th century, we find so-called „literae remissionis“, i. e. letters of indulgence or grace by royal authority, to such as had attempted suicide, and according to one of these same letters they were, *as demoniaci*, occasionally sent to an abbey which, as prison or retreat, was appropriated to suchlike sufferers. Here the entire strange quotation from Carpentier.¹⁾ „*Nostris Demoniacle, Insanus, demens. Lit. remiss. ann. 1384 in Reg. 125. Chartoph. reg. ch. 120: Pierre Nagot a esté le plus du temps, et par especial en temps d'esté, fol et Demoniacle, et s'est plusieurs foyz voulu noyer; et pour cause de ses folies il fu prins et porté en une abbayé nommée S. Sever, en laquelle abbaye l'on maine les Demoniacles.*“

In still more modern times, e. g. the 17th and 18th centuries, many, nay, I presume, all, legislative codes contained laws also on attempted suicide, and generally more severe ones, frequently, indeed, extremely severe ones. — In most modern days, on the contrary, viz. in the 19th century, the generality of legislative codes may be said to have omitted this matter altogether. — Whatever points we wish to specify shall be introduced in the next §, since but little historical importance attaches to them, and the psychological interest which may be presumed to belong to them, will be better ascertained by certain queries and comments than by mere chronological enumerations.

§. 78. A GLANCE AT ARGUMENTS, AND SOME CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS, IN REFERENCE TO THE PRECEDING §.

As regards, firstly, the above recounted mediaeval and later *ritual* punishments of suicide, we are, I presume, bound to take for granted that the christian priesthoods and congregations in the said ages really took their modes of dealing with the corpses of suicides to be in perfect keeping with, if not the words, yet the spirit, of the *corpus juris canonici*. And, when we consider that even now-a-days not all catholic, nay, not all protestant, expounders of the *corpus juris canonici* are quite agreed about the measure of ignominy therein prescribed in regard to suicides, we can scarcely be

¹⁾ Vide Glossarium novum ad scriptores medii aevi, s. v. *Daemoniaci*.

surprised, if in more illiterate and less critical ages gross interpretatory blunders were made, and such practical abuses thereon grafted as favored sacerdotal dominion, and chimed in with popular superstition.

And, secondly, with regard to the more or less cotemporaneous *fiscal* punishments of suicide, we should feel disposed to reason about thus. As the ecclesiastical authorities or the Church looked for guidance in religious legislation to the *corpus juris canonici*, and, whilst doing so, palpably misinterpreted, or exaggerated, or misapplied, the anti-suicidal ritual ordonnances therein contained: similarly the secular powers or the Magistracy, having, whether confessedly or tacitly, in most European countries based their Civil Law on the Justinian Code, evidently either from ignorance mistook the spirit, or from cupidity overlooked the limitations, of the anti-suicidal fiscal principles and precepts therein enunciated. For, though compiled at the instance of a Christian Emperor and by Christian jurisconsults, yet the *corpus juris civilis* had in no measure or manner either by *gloss* or *clause* altered or modified the fixations of the Roman Pagan Lawyers or the rescripts of the Roman Pagan Emperors touching the confiscation of the property of suicides. Gradually, however, the secular christian powers in Europe, allowing ecclesiastical influences to gain, the longer the more, the ascendancy over political ones, could scarcely, by way of imparting to civil jurisdiction what they conceived to be a more specially christian and religious character, fail to decree and to execute *purely temporal* measures against suicide and suicides, i. e. to superadd, out of their own potency and wisdom, fiscal rigor to ritual severity. Inasmuch, namely, as the excommunicated, one and all, were supposed to have justly and legally forfeited their worldly goods, it is not difficult to imagine how the Princes and Barons in the feudal ages could arrive at the determination to seize, either wholly or in part, the property of the slayer of himself. Nevertheless, it would, I divine, argue great deficiency in the knowledge of poor human nature, if we did not feel ourselves justified in suspecting and surmising that the said mediaeval temporal rulers and their immediate successors were actuated in this *lucrative* process often far more by avarice and petty selfishness than by aught like genuine piety and devout abhorrence. — — —

This much touching the Rationale of the mediaeval phenomena which have presented themselves to our notice. Now a

brief historical survey of more and most modern argumentation for and against the principles therein involved.

Even to a Hugo Grotius, and still more to a Samuel Pufendorf (vide their already quoted legal works), as also to their numerous immediate and mediate disciples, suicide still appeared in the light of a felony which deserved to be, and ought to be, visited with a considerable measure of both ritual and fiscal harshness (vide e. g. p. 212 of Formey's diss. as quoted in §. 3, and the popular and original Justus Moser's¹⁾ essay, 1776: „then, one must not be too obliging (gefällig) in permitting burial in the churchyard“; and the anonymous essay 1784:²⁾ „whether, and how, suicide is to be punished?“

However, in the course of the 18th cent. already sundry men arose who, whilst surveying with the keen sight of a liberal mind the character of such criminal codes as the early and late previous ages had bequeathed, touched with a more or less bold hand the views and arguments therein entertained and contained in regard also to suicide, forthwith opposed to them views and arguments the tendency of which was either to question or to deny both the *justice* and the *utility* of dealing with suicide as a crime and to advise or propose the partial or entire removal of ignominious burial and confiscation of property in connexion therewith.

Strange to say, the earliest and most influential among this latter description of writers were, nominally at least, Catholics. Montesquieu may be said to stand with his *lettres Persanes* in the van (vide §. 74). Voltaire, as we have seen, followed anno 1766 in his footsteps with still more indignant violence and telling scoff. But, perhaps, the most benevolent and meritorious, but on that very account in his day most vehemently attacked and maligned, laborer on this field was the Italian Beccaria,³⁾ who in his turn was soon followed, in a more searching and elaborate manner, by his countryman Filangieri.⁴⁾ Also the hints which Gibbon dropped (vide p. 209

¹⁾ *Patriotische Phantasien*, Th. III, pp. 73—76 of his *sämmtliche Werke* in the edit. 1842. ²⁾ In Schlözer's *Staatsanzeigen*, Band VI, pp. 295—300. ³⁾ *Dei delitti e delle pene* is the Italian title of his short, but immortal, work which was published anno 1764. I use, however, the German version with Hommel's approving, but not very pertinent, notes, Breslau 1778, in which vide §. XXXII, pp. 169—179. ⁴⁾ *Scienza della Legislazione*, published anno 1780 vide B. IV, Cap. 55, p. 679—692 of Siebenkees' German translation of it, Anspach, 1787. Beccaria had headed his chapter simply „On suicide“; but Filangieri subscribes the one in which he treats of our topic; „On crimes which ought not to be punished.“

of §. 74) were in the same spirit, with the addition of a skeptical sneer. And, finally, in Germany also, Frederick the Great himself being the leader in this matter, numerous voices were raised to the same effect, voices, however, which can scarcely be affirmed to have made themselves heard beyond the frontiers of Germany itself, wherefore I may content myself with specially mentioning only Soden who wrote anno 1783.¹⁾ I will, however, now proceed to give in a few words the *substance* of what has been said, or at all events might have been said, for and against the ritual and fiscal punishment of suicide.

Arguments *pro*.

Severe penal laws and measures prevent the contagion of example by powerfully impressing the imagination and feelings of the living, and by inducing relatives to watch more carefully, and to warn more solemnly, those in their immediate environment and under their direct influence. — The thought of being ignominiously interred, of having one's property taken from the natural heirs, and of bequeathing a sort of public disgrace to one's family, may deter even those from destroying themselves who would *fail* otherwise become suicides. — Consequently, if the ecclesiastical ignominy and civil disadvantages connected with suicide were done away with, suicide would as matter of course be still more frequent.

Arguments *contra*.

The savageness displayed by the authorities in dishonoring the senseless corpse of a suicide, is in itself discreditable, perfectly useless, since the departed does not feel it, and everybody who contemplates suicide knows that his corpse too would just as little feel a similar punishment, and is palpably not calculated to humanize the mass of the people. — Wife and children may have been bereft of their supporter by the voluntary death of husband and parent; if, now, additionally his property be seized and taken, their only remaining substance would be thus withdrawn, and they would be reduced to utter beggary, and might possibly be themselves driven by this very procedure to suicidal despair: and, at all events, it is unjust and tyrannical to cause suchlike fiscal punishment to fall on the innocent, and cruel to make by even ritual ignominy the already sorely afflicted suffer anything additional. — One ought, if possible,

¹⁾ Geist der teufelischen Criminal-Gesetze, B. II, §. 117—124, pp. 145—156.

to conceal suicide from the children of a suicide; for, parental example is dangerous to the children, in whom a predisposition to imitate it might be engendered: such concealment, however, is impracticable, if the suicidal corpse be penally dealt with. — No considerations about what is to take place afterwards, in regard to the wife's or child's support or honor, will prevent one who voluntarily forsakes life and relatives; and no ignominy really does fall upon the suicide's memory, though the laws appoint that it should, since the power of public opinion is mightier than those laws, and will not accord it; and any law which does not stand in harmony with public opinion is ineffective. — Statistical tables show that in countries where suicide is most severely punished by the laws, it nevertheless not only continues, but occurs far more frequently than in countries where it is less severely visited, or not visited at all. — If suicide be a sin against God, God himself, into whose immediate power the suicide has passed over, must be left to punish the deceased. —

It is, in the first place, clear that these reasons or reasonings, speaking generally, have nothing at all to do with the religious or ethical estimate of suicide: they regard the question only, or chiefly, from a politico-economical or juridico-législative standing-point. Of course, however, men like e. g. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Gibbon would also *ethically* deny the justice of penal interference with suicide; but this was not the case with e. g. Beccaria, who even alludes emphatically to an unblessed Eternity and Hell-fire for the suicidal soul, or with even Filangieri who says distinctly that he will not write an apology for an action which Religion abhors and the Laws must not approve. Two thirds of Beccaria's argumentation consist in an attempt to prove that suicide is just as little a sin against *Society* as emigration is, aye, and by far the most original and, haply, striking part thereof consists in a tirade, acute, irrefutable, exhaustive, against anti-emigration laws as useless, injurious, impracticable: the drift of which tirade is to show that anti-suicidal laws are still more foolish and cruel, since the suicide inflicts a far minor injury on society than the emigrant, inasmuch as the latter takes his property with him, and may thus strengthen another country at the expense of his own, whereas the former leaves his property behind, and thus becomes at all events neutral. Which same parallel of Beccaria's has been by some laughed at

and refuted, and by others applauded and defended. For my own part, I can neither exactly accept or approve it, because I disrelish, as I have said already on other occasions, all one-sided comparisons between things which really embody essential differences. Now-a-days, at all events, emigration is *not* forbidden; and we need, therefore, all the less argue the said point. — Filangieri regards the suicide as a sort of Exile in whom the State has no longer any concern at all, and arrives at the conclusion that no punishment against suicide ought to be permitted, unless a criminal should have been guilty of some crime involving fines, infamy, confiscation, or unless he should even have destroyed himself *after* the sentence, because nobody ought to be condemned, when he can no longer defend himself.

It is, in the second place, equally clear that not to each of the above *anti-penal* reasons and reasonings the same weight legitimately pertains: some of them are rather top-heavy than self-sustained, and might, therefore, easily tumble to the ground. But, in their *collective* strength they have so far proved convincing and invincible that, as we have seen in the preceding §, almost every modern European Code has been altered so as to prove that the latter part of the 18th cent. and the first half of the 19th century have pretty generally subscribed to their substantial justice and truth. — And, from across the Atlantic the proem to a testimony of the theoretical recognition and practical adoption of the spirit that inspired them and breathes in them shall here find a place. Edward Livingston, working upon the basis of the laws of France, when framing his Code for the State of Louisiana, where it has been adopted, I believe, up to this day, speaks as follows on our topic.¹⁾ „Melancholy, misfortune and despair, sometimes urge the unhappy to an act, which, by most criminal codes, is considered as an offence of the deepest die; and which, being directly principally against the offender himself, would have required a separate division, if it had been admitted in this code. *It has not*; because its insertion would be contrary to some of the fundamental principles which have been employed for framing it. — Suicide can never be punished but by making the penalty (whether it be forfeiture or disgrace) fall exclusively upon the innocent.“ Etc. Etc.

¹⁾ Project of a new penal code for the State of Louisiana, 1824, pp. 26, 27.

It does not necessarily belong to my task as historian that I should stop to weigh the above pro's and con's; but I may be permitted simply to record my own individual impressions on a matter which has been so copiously discussed, and so variously decided.

I. Touching consummated suicide.

1. In case of Insanity.

If any person destroy himself, whilst evidently and proveably either in a *state* of lunacy or under an *attack* of derangement, there cannot, as I conceive, by any earthly possibility inhere in either the civil or the ecclesiastical authorities of Christendom any lawful right whatsoever to interfere either rudely or gently with the performance of such funeral rites as are customary in the country. Such a person died literally *of disease* or *by accident*, or, to employ a favorite and solemn, though somewhat pedantic and stilted, phrase „by the visitation of God“; and, as little as man is ever really able „to justify the ways of God to man“, though many attempt to do so in long-winded, often equally arrogant and feeble, *Essays*, so little is man ever by any circumstance called upon *to visit the ways of God upon man*, or, justified in trying to do so. — I am not aware that any Christian government ever proscribed any particular manner of dealing with the corpses of those who die a *natural death* in public or private lunatic asylums, as officially declared confirmed lunatics; nor can I say, whether any Christian government would now-a-days incline to prescribe any specific distinction to be made with respect to the interment of such, and that of the inmates of the said asylums who have happened *to lay violent hands upon themselves*. At all events, however, as it seems to me, sound judgment and correct feeling would enjoin that no distinction of the kind should be even suggested. As a matter of course, right sense and good taste would incline us to bury *all* suchlike ill starved victims, in whatever manner their respective deaths had come about, without exception as simply and quietly as may be, but yet decorously, feelingly, and, above all, in a manner that must preclude the notion that either the Church or the State finds aught reprehensible or culpable in what the said unfortunate persons have suffered or acted. As we ought to manifest sympathy with them, whilst they are alive, so we ought to evidence compassion towards them, when they are dead. Any other procedure, whether implied or expressed, is ungenerous, unmanly, unchristian, unjust. Perhaps, the nearest

relatives ought in such cases to be consulted; for, speaking strictly, they still retain, and they alone, unless the funeral take place at the expense of the State, a right to determine what should be done.

— Most certainly, now, it is perfectly immaterial, whether chronically or acutely insane persons *destroy themselves* in a lunatic asylum or *at home*, or *anywhere else*. If he or she really *be insane*, it is enough for our argument. No clergyman, no magistrate, as I take it, has any right whatsoever to demand that in such distressing cases any ordinary and customary decorous or even religious rite should be foregone or omitted. On the other hand, however, the relations or friends of the deceased would, unquestionably, prove themselves wanting in true delicacy, were they to desire that he or she should be buried with aught resembling „pomp or circumstance“; but if they did desire this, public opinion would fall heavily enough upon them, and very justly so: and, therefore, even in such *exceptional* instances, supposing them ever to occur, clerical and magisterial interference would be, to say the least of it, perfectly supererogatory. — Of fiscal punishment in such cases it were, I trust, needless to speak.

II. In case of non-Insanity.

No doubt at all, conscious, wilful, deliberate suicide does clash, directly and irremediably, with the spirit of christian ethics and the forms of christian society; and, were this even not really the case, at all events the various ecclesiastical polities of Christendom still continue to view the matter in this light: therefore, if the said polities have any rights at all, and any duties emanating from those very rights, they are, as it appears to me, both entitled and called upon to evince their disapproval, aye, their condemnation, of every and any case of conscious, wilful, deliberate suicide. It need not be, nor, as it seems to me, aught it to be, here the question: *cul bono*? No matter, whether the testifying of such disapprobation be calculated to multiply or to paucify the number of suicides; the first and only question rather is this: how can the christian community by its ordonnances and regulations best show its sense of the earnestness and sacredness of individual human life?

Away with every sort of fiscal punishment. From his property the suicide himself has most undoubtedly separated himself decidedly, and what is taken from it could only be a robbery committed on the surviving relatives, unless it should have been forfeited to the

State by some *previous crime* which legally involves confiscation, in which case it would, of course, not be the suicidal act as such, but what, independently of it, anteceded it, upon which the punishment of confiscation would be visited.

Away, too, with all theological fantasticalities and ferocious farces about consecrated ground, cross-roads, stakes, etc. If any body still attach any vital value to lying in so-called „consecrated” ground, this is merely a remnant of childish superstition which ought to be cast aside, the sooner the better. In the waters of the ocean, amid the sands of the desert, on the fields of battle — and they are *not* consecrated — many of the holiest of our race have found their last resting-place, and, methinks, sleep quite as soundly as if their remains had been laid beneath the altar of Canterbury Cathedral, or among the trees of Kensall Green Cemetery. No ground *can* be hallowed by Episcopal hocuspocus; but all ground *is* hallowed where the noble and the virtuous lie interred. All our so-called consecrated grave-yards without exception, nay, even our Westminster Abbeys, and Dynastic Vaults of royalty and nobility harbor the bones of a sufficient number of *sinner*s of every description, of sinners far blacker and more loathsome, many of them, than the majority of suicides are: why, then, should a *felo de se* be singled out for exclusion? Or, if excluded, what good reason can he have to care? And as for interments *à la dog*, or *à la ass*, or *à la cock-chaffer*, these have, I presume, but few defenders left in this our 19th century, and therefore we need not revert to them here again.

But, there still remain certain earnest and delicate ceremonies, mere *forms too*, it is true, but *yet symbols*, — and beyond symbols man, as long as he lives in flesh and blood, will never entirely get — funeral ceremonies which the Church (to whose province alone the punishment of suicide must be regarded as belonging) by way of discipline, vigilance, order, decorum, may, I humbly ween, refuse to the self-felon. No ecclesiastical functionary need attend; no passing bell need be tolled; no liturgy need be read; no hymns need be chanted; no oration need be pronounced. In the light of day (not in the darkness of the night), at any hour most convenient to the relatives and friends who may choose to accompany the corpse, let it be borne *decently*, like any other corpse, to the grave-yard, and there laid in its tomb *silently*. And, if I mistake not, all lay

persons of sense and feeling, the relatives and friends of the deceased, though they should deem and feel themselves bound by duty, or disposed by affection, to escort the corpse, will of their own accord decline a long train of mourning coaches, and omit the delivery of pathetic speeches. If, however, they should not do so *of their own free will*, the Church has already by her *passivity* sufficiently expressed her censure, and any active intermeddling on her part with the want of good taste or of delicate feeling on the part of those to whose care the conducting of the funeral has thus been entrusted, seems to me gratuitous and ill-advised. — In such wise, then, let the self-felon sleep the sleep, whether deep or disturbed, of the tomb amid those whom a natural death had pillowed on the earth's bosom, sleep, perchance, at the side of but too well-loved or but too ill-loved spouse or child, brother or sister: our mortal ear cannot hear what of secret converse they may hold on their first meeting in the stilly night of the grave, nor may any mortal tongue tell what their relative positions to one another will be, when unto each the great trumpet-voice shall have sounded its „arise; for lo! the hour of judgment hath come.“ — — —

Our age is laboring fast to wipe the stains of blood from, and to erase the brands of infamy out of, the Criminal Codes of the middle ages and of the 17th and 18th centuries, and, consequently, it suits no longer the spirit of this age to legislate for the purpose of inspiring terror into others. We thank God that it is so. Therefore, such questions as: is suicide in the aggregate likely thus to be diminished? is any individual likely thus to be prevented from committing self-destruction? are in my sight not of primary importance, but have at the utmost only secondary significance. No doubt, however, the procedure I have specified is, according to every imaginable analogy, more likely to check suicide than *no disciplinary visitation at all* would be likely to do: and, as it seems to me, *more than* the disciplinary visitation I have indicated and vindicated is, to say the least of it, not in harmony with that degree of enlightenment and refinement which our modern Codes of Law are, the longer the more, endeavoring to reflect faithfully and powerfully.

In the previous §, I made a point of observing silence on one mode of dealing with the corpses of self-felons which I will now, for the sake of completeness rather than of argument, say a very few words about. In the said § I promised to introduce a leading

article from the Times Newspaper of Dec. 8, 1818. Here it is „Upon every principle of reason and humanity, if we may introduce such words upon such a subject, we should advise that the bodies of persons dying by their own hands, *from whatever cause*, should be given for dissection. We have no question, that by such a measure the number of suicides, particularly of female suicides, would be reduced: the act would, therefore, be humane; and whatever number of bodies were given for dissection, by so many would the necessity of body-stealing be diminished, and a horrible race of ruffians, the resurrection men, as they are called, eradicated. Policy, therefore, is in favour of the measure. There is another point of view, also, in which we would recommend the matter to consideration. In most cases of suicide, the Jury finds a verdict of Lunacy: by the more frequent dissection of such bodies, therefore, the cause of that most melancholy of all human maladies, insanity, might be more accurately investigated; and might, perhaps, at last be well understood. In whatever way the act operated, it could not fail to be useful: if it checked suicide, its beneficial tendency would be obvious: if it failed of this effect, it would at least diminish grave-robbing. We sincerely recommend the subject to public attention.“

So far Mr. Anonymous. Consequently, also the bodies of *veritably insane* persons! What we have already said implies our decided dissent from this part of the said proposition. Consequently, also the bodies of the *highest* classes!! But, pray, would not Mr. Anonymous have found *some saving clause* for a Lord Clive, a Viscount Castlereagh, a Sir Samuel Romilly, a Mr. Whitbread, a Lord Congleton, and sundry others of a like station? Nor was Mr. Anonymous' proposition by any means an original idea; something very similar may be found as passed law in the modern Codes of e. g. Saxony, Baden, Hessen (which the reader shall be left to consult at his leisure), however only in regard to *wilful* suicides, and this is a tangible improvement thereon. But — mark this — e. g. in the Grand Duchy of Baden the relatives can legally rescue the suicidal corpse from the Anatomist's Knife by *paying a certain fixed sum of money*, and e. g. in the Kingdom of Württemberg it is a thing unheard-of that the corpse of any person of gentle birth, good property, high office is really conveyed into either the nearest public Anatomy or any private Surgery! And in these circumstances lies the vulnerable and even damning element of the law under men-

tion, practically, if not theoretically. We have surely enough of separate laws for the Rich and High and the Poor and Low operating during their lives, without adding thereto laws which shall make a distinction, invidious, unjust, cruel, disgusting, between them, when they are dead! (vide what was said in §. 13).

II. Touching attempted suicide.

1. In case of Insanity.

Here nothing need be added to what is implied in what we have previously said. The Physician alone would have to be consulted, and an Asylum would alone have to be recommended.

2. In case of non-Insanity.

Very many and very various modes of punishing the unsuccessful attempt have been both projected in law-books and actually carried into effect, some capricious and harsh, others more judicious and humane, e. g. severe corporal punishment, permanent banishment out of the country, monetary fines, imprisonment, condemnation to hard labor in the public works for six or twelve months, temporary confinement in a hospital or penitentiary, citation and admonition before the magistrates, being placed under the special surveillance of the police, etc. etc.

Of course, the entire question requires several distinctions. For instance. Firstly, it is not the same thing, whether a person voluntarily stopped short, or was checked by others. Secondly, it is not the same thing, whether a person made the attempt from melancholy, grief, sickness, poverty, or from some merely frivolous motive or superficial cause. Thirdly, it is not the same thing, whether a person be of otherwise moral and inoffensive character, or in general of dangerous temper and vicious life. Fourthly, it is not the same thing, whether a person be educated and have a sheltering home, or be ignorant and comparatively adrift on the wide world.

The offender or sufferer is still there, can state or prove his or her reasons. Well, let these reasons be assigned and shown to the physician or clergyman, magistrate or police-officer, town-missionary or director of the Union; and, when they have been investigated, let the fittest persons or person endeavor to remove them, whether they be internal or external, or both. *If you cannot remove them*, the attempt will, in all human probability, be sooner or later repeated, and attended with better success; and, unless you really *do* remove them, you have but little reason to expect, and certainly

no power to force, a person, who has arrived at the years of discretion, to live. Mere magisterial exhortations or ghostly ministrations cannot cure deep-seated physical disease, or scare away ghastly mental affliction; mere precautionary vigilance cannot supply bread, provide labor, silence duns, discharge debts; mere words cannot help where actions were wanted: — and, have you even a right to detain a fellow-being in life, if that life be, and must, by a sort of sad necessity, remain, to him or her merely a prolonged process of sickness, or of starvation, or of infamy; or of remorse?

But, is not every one among us called upon by a divine voice to be his „brother's keeper?“ Doubtless! Remember, however, that it is *sorry keeping* which steps in „at the eleventh hour“ only. „Obsta principiis“ in others, as well as in thyself: — and then thou mayst, O Christian Law-Court, throw overboard the question about the best mode of punishing (or, dealing with) an unsuccessful attempt at suicide; for, in the first place, it will far less frequently present itself to thy notice; — and, secondly, the rarer cases need not concern thee: philanthropy, the „good Samaritan“, will enact what the peculiar circumstances attendant on the individual case shall suggest as needful or salutary.

Nor would we place in matters of this description much dependence on e. g. that honorable and sapient gentleman in our own Metropolis who would fain „put down“ this and that, anything and everything: Sir Peter may be very busy and very potent, but far busier and more potent still are they who „mow down“, even e. g. yon three weird-sisters, the spectres of Despair, Drunkenness and Fever, which year by year, month by month, week by week, day by day and night by night appear, not on a desert heath, but on some one of the crowded Thames' bridges, and the first of which, whilst gazing o'er our City of Cities, speaks, as a noble-minded and sharp-sighted and carefully listening living poet assures us,¹⁾ thus:

„Countless thousands bend to me,
In rags and purple, in hovel and hall;
And pay the tax of misery,
With tears and blood and spoken gall.
Whenever they cry
For aid to die,
I give them courage to dare the worst,

- 1) The Mowers. Town Lyrics, by Charles Mackay, 1848.

And leave their ban on a world accurst.
I show them the river — so black and deep —
They take the plunge — they sink to sleep:
I show them poison — I show them rope —
They rush to death without a hope!
Poison and rope and pistol ball,
Welcome either, welcome all!
I am the lord of the teeming town,
I mow them down, I mow them down."

Though, however, unsuccessfully attempted suicide be not exactly a proper topic for either penal codes or police regulations, one thing would seem to me to be beyond dispute: no person who had made an attempt upon his own life can fitly be placed in, or left in, any office of trust, dignity, influence, responsibility. The public wardens of religion, morality, law, and order would appear to me to owe this consideration to both Church and State: and the reasons are too self-evident to require specification.

And here and now, then, having reached the goal of our somewhat long and wearisome wanderings, I will lay down the pen which, I know well, I have not held always with equally steady hand, or used to equally good purpose. No doubt, erudite and thoughtful persons will discover errors both of ignorance and over-haste in some paragraphs; no doubt, the orthodox and sensitive among my compatriots will shrink with horror from the standing-point, on which I have fearlessly placed myself, and from the results, at which I have conscientiously arrived, in some parts of my treatise. — My excuse to the first-mentioned class of people must be the great extent of territory over which my reading had to range, and the unquestionable intricacy of many of the points which I was obliged to grapple with. Had we not to occupy ourselves with the most subtle thinkers of ancient Greece and Italy as well as likewise to deal with the most dreamy Asiatic mystics, and the sternest offsprings of a semi-savage state? Had we not to develop well-digested systems of religious faith or of speculative boldness as well as also to draw inferences from the merest fragments of laws or from isolated passages in tediously lengthy codes of law? Had we not often to stop to analyse various merely verbal or formal items as well as equally to endeavor to acquire synthetically a clear in-

sight into the relations and connexions of the mental and social phenomena which lay before us? — To the second class of people above alluded to I have, however, no apology to offer, unless they should incline to view a deliberate avowal of manly sincerity in the light of one. I have not concealed from the reader that I once, fervently and zealously, entertained what have come to be called among ourselves now-a-days, strangely enough by the by, evangelical opinions, nor have I made any secret of the struggle and pain it cost me gradually to outgrow and finally to cast away those same opinions. That neither the Nicene Creed nor the Thirty Nine Articles have any very special value in my eyes, I have said more than once in perfectly explicit language, and I have on all suitable occasions frankly confessed absolutely my heterodox, rationalistic convictions about Prophets and Apostles, the mission of Moses and the nature of Jesus, the origin of Judaism and the essence of Christianity. These convictions I do not force upon any body; I merely lay them before the impartial, intelligent, educated reader for examination; and all I wish to say in reference to them, is this: neither catechization nor vituperation from clergyman or laywoman would exercise even the slightest influence towards shaking my own individual persuasion of their substantial correctness. — And as to the apparently anti-Anglican spirit which breathes in many of the preceding pages, I must be allowed to observe that one may, surely, at this time of day at least, and after the mournful display we have recently made of many of our national characteristics, be an Englishman, true, loyal, patriotic, *without* being „John-Bullish“, aye, just *by* being a declared enemy to all unadulterated „John Bullism“ which is, frequently and in many respects, only another term for ignorant conceit, or shallow bigotry, or insufferable arrogance, or contemptible hypocrisy, for most stupid Bibliolatry, or most iniquitous Mammonolatry, or most ridiculous Aristolatry; and to which we may with much just cause put you well-known question: „why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?“

MISPRINTS.

As the foregoing Book has been printed in Germany, and about one half of it when I had no opportunity of communicating *orally* with the very intelligent and obliging compositor, who happens to be unacquainted with English, it is pretty natural to suppose that, despite our united pains, several errata have crept into the English text. Very few of them, however, have appeared to me of such importance as to call for especial notice here. Occasional mistakes in punctuation or orthography (e. g. strictist for strictest, §. 28, p. 82, J'll for I'll, §. 72, p. 150 and §. 78, p. 154), the reader may surely be left to correct for himself. Nor is he very likely to be misled by an occasional wrong word (e. g. also! for alas! §. 8, p. 75, narratives for narrates, §. 49, p. 43, or even the occasional omission of some trifling word (e. g. been for been called, §. 66, p. 72, from town for from the town, §. 36, p. 171).

The same remarks will apply likewise to occasional slight defects in the accentuation, vocalization, or termination of some foreign words (e. g. תְּרַצָּח for תְּרַצָּח, §. 48, p. 12, berischith for bereschith, §. 57, p. 111, Moera for Moira, §. 4, p. 24, $\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{\alpha}$ for $\acute{\iota}\tilde{\alpha}$, §. 26, p. 51, cynosarge for cynosarges, §. 27, p. 69), and in the spelling of Proper Names of persons (e. g. Origines for Origenes, §. 6, p. 49, Melancthon for Melanchthon, §. 66, p. 60, Menckenism for Menkenism, §. 63, p. 4, Grossley for Grosley, §. 11, p. 136, and sundry inaccuracies in two or three of the Roman names in §. 35, p. 199 at the bottom).

More awkward, because sense-disturbing, are some few wrong words or forms (e. g. aegre for aequae, non for cum, misertane for misertam, quaeretur for quaereretur, §. 28, p. 80, fama for fame, causa for causá, §. 69, p. 94, de for te, §. 30, p. 112, \acute{o} $\acute{\iota}\delta\iota\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ for \acute{o} $\tau\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ \acute{o} $\acute{\iota}\delta\iota\omicron\varsigma$, §. 44, p. 35, though most of them may be found correctly printed in other parts of the Treatise, when incidentally introduced); and likewise some few wrong numbers (e. g. XVI, 16 for V, 6, §. 22, p. 4, V, 6 for XVI, 16 *ibid.* p. 15, Finchk, 1827 for Finckh, 1847, §. 24, p. 27, pp. 248, 249 for pp. 81, 82, §. 30, p. 111, 1300 for 1700, §. 37, p. 34, 20 for 29, §. 65, p. 44).

